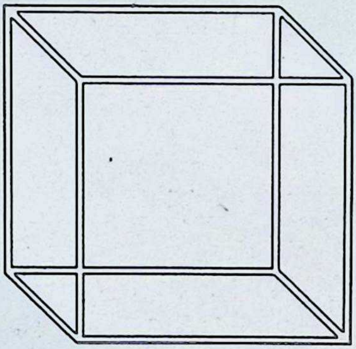
THE EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS

AN INTRODUCTION TO EARLY INDIAN MĀDHYAMIKA

C. W. HUNTINGTON, JR.

WITH GESHE NAMGYAL WANGCHEN



The Mādhyamika or Middle Way, a school of Buddhist thought that originated in India in the second or third century, was a decisive influence in the subsequent development of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In a new approach to its study, *The Emptiness of Emptiness* reconsiders the central doctrine of emptiness and shows that the Mādhyamika critique of all philosophical views is both subtler and more radical than most Western interpretation indicates.

Building on earlier research into Sanskrit and Tibetan sources, the present work also examines the assumptions that have governed the study of Asian soteriological philosophy. In assessing the philosophical significance of the Mādhyamika, the author demonstrates that the thrust toward a self-critical awareness of methodological presuppositions lies at the very heart of early Indian Mādhyamika.

In this analysis, the self-deconstructing categories of Nāgārjuna and his immediate followers emerge as an *edifying philosophy* that may have a great deal to offer to discussion of the related problems of objectivity and relativism—issues crucial to current philosophical conversations in the West.

The volume also contains the first complete English translation of Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* (The Entry into the Middle Way), with extensive exegetical and text-critical notes.

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER,
WITHOUT WHOSE LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT
THIS BOOK WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

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PREFACE

This book contains a study and a translation of *The Entry into the Middle Way,* a philosophical and religious text composed in India sometime during the first half of the seventh century A.D. by a Buddhist monk named Candrakīrti. It was a treatise of critical importance to the development of Buddhism in Tibet and, presumably, in its native India as well. As the title implies, Candrakīrti's text is essentially an introductory manual for those wishing to study and practice the soteriological philosophy known as the Mādhyamika (middle way) or Śūnyavāda (doctrine of emptiness). But it would be best to acknowledge from the very start that this "primer" was never intended to serve the needs of an audience like the one to which it is now being presented in its English translation. The first part of the book is therefore aimed at discovering what meaning *The Entry into the Middle Way* might have for us. It is designed to be read both as a commentary on Candrakīrti's treatise and as an introduction to early Indian Mādhyamika.

Part 2 began years ago with Geshé Wangchen's intention to produce an unembellished translation of Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra,* as an introductory text for Mādhyamika studies. Before long, however, it became evident that the treatise's extremely terse and cryptic style demanded some sort of annotation if our translation was to be useful to anyone not already familiar with early Indian Buddhist literature. Eventually even extensive annotation proved insufficient. In surveying modern publications dealing with the Mādhyamika, we began to see that the maze of interpretations could be sorted into a few distinct themes which seemed to preserve, with only superficial variations, the vocabulary and attitudes critiqued by Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. The single exception to this pattern appears to be what I call the "linguistic interpretation." In the face of this mass of Western scholarship, the plan to present a bare translation of the text seemed more inadequate than ever, and yet it was obvious that references to even recent studies had to be used with care and accompanied by explicit qualifications. The Mādhyamika critique of all views and beliefs is certainly much subtler and much more radical than most Western interpretation indicates. Some introductory remarks were required to explain the situation, and soon the "introduction" had swelled to its present size. The translation represents a joint effort on the part of Geshé Wangchen and myself, but I assume full responsibility for assessing the significance of Candrakīrti's work in the context of modern Buddhist scholarship.

Early Mādhyamika explicitly claims to operate as a rejection, or deconstruction, of all attempts to create a value-free, objective view of truth or reality. From the very beginning this was the crux of the Mādhyamika critique, and in fact it was only much later, in reaction to the writings of Bhāvaviveka and his followers, that this total rejection of all fixed views and beliefs came to be specifically associated with the name Prāsaṅgika. The Sanskrit word *dṛṣṭi,* which I have translated "philosophical view," is actually a technical term used in a variety of contexts where it refers to the full range of opinion, belief, and intellectual conviction of any kind, and finally, to any form of reified thought, regardless of whether it is registered in a precisely articulated, rationalist methodology or in a largely unconscious tendency to think only according to certain innate patterns. Ultimately, the Mādhyamika's rejection of all views is more the rejection of an attitude or *way of thinking* than the rejection of any particular concept. This element of Nāgārjuna's thought has been responsible for the greatest controversy among both ancient and modern commentators.

The Mādhyamika sets itself in opposition to a philosophical tradition which was preoccupied with the search for more and more precise technical terminology and had neglected the practical application of philosophical theory, which had previously carried the teachings into the emotive and volitional life of the early Buddhist community. Entirely apart from the pseudoproblem of "original Buddhism," Nāgārjuna's critique can be understood as an attempt to reinstate what was clearly felt to be the earlier spirit of the buddha's teachings by prescribing a remedy to the complex of historical developments that had severed theory from practice. His concept of "dependent designation" *(prajñaptir upādāya)* recognizes that the meaning of words derives exclusively from their usage or application in everyday affairs. Accordingly, the significance of the words and concepts used within the Mādhyamika system derives not from their supposed association with any objectively privileged vocabulary supporting a particular view of truth or reality, but from their special efficacy as instruments which may be applied in daily life to the sole purpose of eradicating the suffering caused by clinging, antipathy, and the delusion of reified thought. Thus, although Candrakīrti has no fixed position to defend, it does not necessarily follow that his arguments are mere sophistry, for genuine meaning and significance is to be found in their *purpose.* The critical distinction here is between systematic philosophy, concerned with the presentation of a particular view or belief *(dṛṣṭi),* and edifying philosophy, engaged in strictly deconstructive activity (the Mādhyamika *prasaṅgavākya*). The central concepts of an edifying philosophy must ultimately be abandoned when they have served the purpose for which they were designed. Such concepts are not used to express a view but *to achieve an effect:* They are a means *(upāya).*

In the course of the following pages I have referred to the Mādhyamika as "soteriological philosophy" or "philosophical propaganda." This has been done, first, in order to emphasize the all-important point that this philosophy cannot, even in theory, be dissociated from a concept of practical application; and second, so that it might be more clearly distinguished as a truly radical departure from the type of philosophical enterprise through which one endeavors to discover or define an objective, value-free view of truth or reality.

Finally, it must be stressed that while the work of modern deconstructionists provided the impetus for the linguistic interpretation of the Mādhyamika I have developed, and even for some of the technical vocabulary I use to discuss Candrakīrti's text, no one-to-one correspondence between two philosophical traditions separated by so much time and space does or can exist. I have used the ideas of Wittgenstein and other modern philosophers simply as hermeneutical tools to analyze the Mādhyamika literature and to extrapolate from it in order to see what meaning it might have for us. And for us, meaning is necessarily embedded in the symbolic forms of our culture and our time. In response to the reader who condemns all such attempts to interpret a text on the ground that the text itself does not employ our linguistic and conceptual structures, I can only throw up my hands in despair of ever understanding any ancient way of thinking. At some point we simply must acknowledge that no translation and no text-critical methodology can be sacrosanct. Translation and all other forms of hermeneutical activity rest firmly on the preconscious forms of linguistic and cultural prejudices peculiar to our historical situation. The most vital challenge faced by scholars is certainly summed up in their responsibility to make their (and their readers') presuppositions entirely conscious and to convey through their work a sense of the wonder and uncertainty of coming to terms with the original text. The interpretive comments of part 1 are offered solely as a tool for approaching the Mādhyamika as living philosophy. The translation will provide the reader with an opportunity to work as closely as possible to Candrakīrti's writing.

Modern deconstruction and pragmatism are especially valuable to us not only because their concerns seem so near, in certain respects, to those of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, but also precisely because these philosophies belong to us. In making an effort to interpret a foreign system of thought, we cannot but use the conceptual equipment already at our disposal. Gadamer has recognized and discussed the element of effective history present in understanding, but the two thousand years during which Buddhism spread from one culture to another throughout Asia provide more than ample testimony against both the rationalist ideal of prejudiceless objectivity and its converse, an uncritical romanticism. Those presently engaged in the study of Buddhist literature can do no less than acknowledge openly, as a matter of intellectual integrity, the deeply problematic nature of any concept of meaning based exclusively on the recapturing or repetition of a text's "original message." For the Mādhyamika the problem is by no means confined to concepts of textual interpretation. The hermeneutical process involved in this kind of understanding is itself a particular instantiation of the universal mystery of change, and as such it is merely one more facet of the interplay between past and present that incorporates and continually transforms and renews all that we know and all that we are.

—C. W. H.
Sarnath, India

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The roots of this book stretch back to an idyllic summer in the Himalayan village of Musoorie, where Geshé Namgyal Wangchen and I passed the mornings together carefully working out a first draft of our translation of Candrakīrti's text. But it was not only the translation that began that summer. The issues that laid a foundation for my continuing interest in Mādhyamika also first presented themselves during our long afternoon walks. I soon discovered that Geshé Wangchen is a natural philosopher, that for him no question is irrelevant, no area of experience outside the range of legitimate philosophical concerns. It was certainly then, in the course of our wonderful, timeless conversations, that I began to understand how philosophy can be much more than a system of concepts. For Geshé Wangchen and so many of his countrymen, philosophy is very definiely a way of life, and philosophical questions must always relate, in one way or another, to the problems of living. No doubt this attitude toward philosophy left its mark on me and guided my approach to the texts throughout the years that this book was taking shape. Since that time many people have contributed to my thinking, and each has influenced my efforts to preserve the spirit of what I learned that summer. I am particularly grateful to Luis O. Gómez for his careful reading of the first draft of the translation and notes, for his criticisms and suggestions at that crucial stage, and, most of all, for the example he provides—a rare combination of unexcelled scholarship with a deep, personal concern for the responsibilities of teaching. The many hours we spent over coffee paralleled those I had shared with Geshé Wangchen in India, for once again the discussion took place in an atmosphere where the greatest attention could be given to the need for bringing philosophy to bear on the problems of everyday life. Among those who have had the most profound impact on my thought I must also mention Bob Sharf, with whom I have had innumerable fascinating conversations on just about everything, and Gregory Schopen, who provided an invaluable service in allowing me to sharpen my initial understanding of the Mādhyamika against the whetstone of his formidable intellect. My reading of the Indian sources has benefited a great deal from the many hours I have shared with Pandit Ram Shankar Tripathi of Sanskrit University, Varanasi. I would like to thank my mūlaguru, Madhav Deshpande, for years of continuing encouragement, and, most recently, for his meticulous reading of Sanskrit words and phrases scattered throughout this book. John Newman and William Ames also gave their time and energy to the task of proofreading. Any errors that might still have slipped through must be attributed entirely to changes that have occurred since the text left those capable hands. Dr. Bimal K. Matilal read parts of the manuscript in an early draft and offered valuable suggestions, as did Dr. Meredith Williams, who managed to find time for the task despite her busy schedule as a visiting professor at the University of Michigan. Pat Pranke was always available for an animated epistemological argument, until he disappeared into the Burmese jungle. I am very grateful to the American Institute of Indian Studies for their support during the initial stages of research. And finally I want to thank Liz, who came late to this particular project but has nevertheless endured more than her share of the tribulations involved in carrying it through to completion. She is everything: a loyal friend, a therapist, a teacher, an unflagging partner in the most abstruse conversations, and a patient, loving wife.

THE EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS

PART ONE

CANDRAKĪRTI AND EARLY INDIAN MĀDHYAMIKA

The emptiness of the conquerors was taught in order to do away with all philosophical views. Therefore it is said that whoever makes a philosophical view out of "emptiness" is indeed lost.
—Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamakaśāstra*

Buddhism is not and never has pretended to be a "theory," an explanation of the universe; it is a way to salvation, a way of life.
—E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*

ous methodology resting on the firm intellectual foundation of philology and historiography. The philological component is realized in the establishment of authoritative texts through the production of meticulous critical editions, heavily annotated translations, detailed indexes, and other reference tools. Text-critical scholars rightfully pride themselves on using all available resource materials. Editions are often based on assigning numerous obscure xylographs to a stemma. In the subfield of Buddhist studies translations frequently rely on source texts in three or more classical Asian languages. The historical aspect of text-critical scholarship consists in the contextualization of these editions and translations, relating them to each other and to known historical events. The aim of this approach to the study of religious philosophy is to define a coherent tradition for the continuum of texts which provide the raw material for research activities. Questions of a text's meaning are generally subordinated or dismissed altogether as irrelevant. Rigorous application of text-critical methodology is required of every serious scholar in the field; even brief digressions into philosophical or soteriological issues are the prerogative of established authorities—those who have already demonstrated their ability to produce the approved text-critical studies. Occasionally, however, recognized experts publish entire articles that treat of some particular question of meaning, applying the same methodological principles in an effort to understand the philosophical and religious content of the texts.

The "proselytic" model offers a distinct alternative to the text-critical scholar's apparent lack of concern with questions of meaning. Here the text-critical methodology is often applied with considerably less rigor. Editions appear rarely; translations are generally based on a single source and are most often not accompanied by any substantial critical apparatus. Historical information, when offered, usually includes uncritical assumption of conflicting or fantastic accounts, supplied more or less verbatim from Asian sources, which are to be accepted at face value. Occasional attempts are made to justify traditional concepts by comparing them to various Western ideas. The existence of a tradition is taken for granted, and proper application of methodology is presumed rather to grant access to this preexistent tradition than to define it. The entire concept of meaning collapses into the search for an atemporal *mens auctoris* which is assumed to be present in the source text. Discovery and restitution of this meaning is the result of close reading of the texts and indigenous commentaries.

While it is true that these two models are in general separated by divergent methods and aims, it is also the case that the proselytic scholar seldom works entirely without recourse to certain elements of the text-critical methodology. The text-critical model is accorded the greatest prestige—due, no doubt, to its close association with what is taken to be the scientific method—but it is also subject to frequent criticism on the grounds that it has become altogether too abstract and sterile in its refusal to give sustained attention to the problem of meaning. True hybrids have developed on both ends of the spectrum—"text-critical proselytism" and "proselytic text criticism"—with varying degrees of success in the academic world.

What I most want to draw attention to here is not the differences between these two models of scholarship, but their commonalities, and these can be summarized in two brief observations. First, both models rest on the concept of an objectively present tradition, that is, a tradition which stands apart from the researcher as the object of all attempts to understand or define it. Second, both models in turn rely on the proper application of an approved methodology supposed to insure access to this tradition. These common features are nowhere spelled out, much less defended. Instead, they remain forever behind the scenes, where they operate as powerful forces shaping the results of all our research by predetermining the forms that questions will take before those questions are ever posed. These presuppositions are entirely unaffected by all the accusations and counteraccusations about "rigorous philological standards" versus "the search for meaning."

The insularity of their discipline has thus far prevented many Asian specialists from noticing that the interrelated concepts "objectivity" and "method" have become targets for a steadily increasing gale of criticism associated with everything from the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer to the pragmatism of James and Dewey, from Nietzsche and Heidegger to Wittgenstein, Derrida, and Foucault. There is insufficient space here even to begin to detail the nature of the change signaled by the writings of these men, or their impact on the assumptions underlying the current models for the study of Asian religious philosophies. As Gadamer has written:

> The thing which hermeneutics teaches us is to see through the dogmatism of asserting an opposition and separation between the ongoing, natural "tradition" and the reflective appropriation of it. For behind this assertion stands a dogmatic objectivism that distorts the very concept of hermeneutical reflection itself. In this objectivism the understander is seen—even in the so-called sciences of understanding like history—not in relationship to the hermeneutical situation and the constant operativeness of history in his own consciousness, but in such a way as to imply that his own understanding does not enter into the event.[2]

In the history of Buddhist studies in Europe and North America, the text-critical and proselytic models of scholarship have exerted a decisive influence on our understanding of Buddhism. This book is, however, based on an alternative approach to the study of Buddhist literature.

Before all else we must agree on what counts as the meaning of a text. I favor what Harold Bloom calls a "strong misreading"—the preference of Richard Rorty's "strong textualist," who "asks neither the author nor the text about their intentions but simply beats the text into a shape which will serve his own purpose."[3] The strong textualist "is in it for what he can get out of it, not for the satisfaction of getting something right."[4] Exactly why I see this as a preeminently Buddhist hermeneutic and therefore a preferred approach to studying Buddhist literature—in direct contrast to both the strict text-critical and the proselytic models—can be inferred from another of Rorty's comments: "The strong textualist . . . recognizes what Nietzsche and James recognized, that the idea of *method* presupposes that of a *privileged vocabulary,* the vocabulary which gets to the essence of the object, the one which expresses the properties which it has in itself as opposed to those which we read into it. Nietzsche and James said that the notion of such a vocabulary was a myth."[5] As did virtually every classical Buddhist author, in particular Nāgārjuna and the other early Indian Mādhyamikas, who rejected all assumptions of meaning bound up with the notion of an objective, value-free philosophical view *(dṛṣṭi),* thesis *(pakṣa),* or proposition *(pratijñā).*

Thanks to the work of Rorty and others, we can begin to appreciate the extent to which strict adherence to the text-critical and proselytic models constitutes a violation of the very texts we bring to our study. Nevertheless, in making the transition within Buddhist studies from an isolated *Fach* to a more broadly based literary criticism, we need to proceed with caution, so as not to sacrifice the legitimate accomplishments of previous scholarship. It is necessary to dismantle the approved methodology and expose its presuppositions, rescue what is most valuable, and move on. D. S. Ruegg has already pointed the way in his research on thesis and assertion in the Mādhyamika:

> The historian of the Madhyamaka—and of Indian and Tibetan philosophy in general—must of course refrain from anachronistically transposing and arbitrarily imposing the concepts of modern semantics and philosophical theory, which have originated in the course of particular historical developments, on modes of thought that have evolved in quite different historical circumstances, and which have therefore to be interpreted in the first place within the frame of their own concerns and the ideas they have themselves developed. Still, in studying Indian and Tibetan thought, the importance of religious and philosophical praxis, and of pragmatics, must receive due attention.[6]

This is precisely the lead I have followed in breaking the closed circle of dogmatic adherence to methodological presuppositions:

> It seems all the more appropriate and legitimate for us to consider the rejection of a *pratijñā* in terms of a pragmatic rather than of an exclusively propositional analysis of assertion and its negation since, from the earliest time, the Madhyamaka—and indeed the Mahāyāna as a whole—has engaged in the analysis and deconstruction of ordinary language with its conceptual categories.[7]

Recourse to the insights of post-Wittgensteinian pragmatism and deconstruction provides us with a new range of possibilities for interpreting *The Entry into the Middle Way* and other early Mādhyamika treatises, for what we learn in our encounter with these texts is in every way a function of the tools we bring to our study.

At present the literature of the Mādhyamika has only begun to be appreciated by Western scholars, and study of Candrakīrti's writing is beset by all the difficulties inherent in any attempt to grapple with a literary tradition that is remote from us in many significant ways. An Indian or Tibetan monk would approach Candrakīrti's work with a rich background of information on the doctrinal issues and technical terminology of other relevant systems. This is how *The Entry into the Middle Way* is presented by the Tibetan tradition even today, behind the walls of monasteries built by the refugee community in India. Years of preparatory study and ritual practice of all kinds, including meditation, give the young monk a context into which he can set each of Candrakīrti's statements and through which he can arrive at an appreciation of the significance of this treatise within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as a whole. Modern Western readers not only lack such a context but find themselves implanted in a different tradition holding to a wide range of premises, some of them at a great remove from those which form the essential features of Candrakīrti's paradigm. This is a difficulty for the general reader and the specialist alike, for even after the most diligent study, many of the concepts expressed in this ancient Indian text may continue to appear as nothing other than intellectual curiosities entirely uprooted from the Buddhist way of life which alone is capable of imparting to them their most profound significance. One important dimension of the problem has been summarized in an article by A. L. Becker: "Esthetic depth is in most cases impossible to translate, so that a fuller understanding of a distant text requires a step beyond translation, a deconstruction of the translation and a reconstruction of the context of its source, mode by mode, so as to describe and explore its particularity."[8]

The notion of esthetic depth may not seem perfectly suited to the specialized set of problems relevant to the study of Buddhist technical literature, but it is an especially valuable concept here, because it draws attention to the fact that in approaching such a work as this we must make a strong effort to uncover "the fundamental concern that motivates the text—the question that it seeks to answer and that it poses again and again to its interpreters."[9] I most certainly do not suggest that we should strive to interpret the text through reference to any supposed *mens auctoris*. As Gadamer and others have argued, meaning is always meaning in the context of history, and history includes both the text and its various interpreters.[10] Yet to the extent that we are unable to appreciate the "particularity" of this treatise within the full context of Candrakīrti's writing, not only in its intellectual but also in its ethical and practical dimensions, we may all too easily devalue or misinterpret one or a number of vital Mādhyamika concepts. The following example illustrates my point.

The Mādhyamika philosopher rejects our most fundamental empirical propositions and the matrix of rationality in which they are cast as matters of strictly normative and ultimately groundless belief. More specifically, according to the Mādhyamika, concepts of logic, and theoretical as well as practical concepts dealing with empirical[11] phenomena like causation, are all grounded in a particular way of life which is itself groundless. Everyday experience is empty of a fixed substratum for the justification of any type of knowledge or belief, and precisely this lack of justification—this being empty even of "emptiness"—is itself the truth of the highest meaning.

With what sort of critical apparatus should we approach such a claim, if indeed it is a claim. It would be inadequate to attempt an investigation with the single question "How would you verify that?" We must also learn to ask such questions as "How would you teach someone what it says?" "How would you hint at its truth?" "What is it like to wonder whether it is true?" These same questions have been phrased elsewhere, in an essay on Ludwig Wittgenstein,[12] and the issues explored in that article are significant for the present attempt at engaging with the Mādhyamika. I suggest that Mādhyamika philosophers can best be understood by entirely disposing of the idea that they are presenting a series of arguments against one set of claims and in favor of another. Rather, as Rorty has said about the pragmatists: "They would simply like to change the subject."[13] Like Wittgenstein and the pragmatists, with whom they have much in common, the Mādhyamikas "keep trying to find ways of making antiphilosophical points in nonphilosophical language."[14] In some ways both Wittgenstein and the modern pragmatists have been more successful than Nāgārjuna or Candrakīrti at accomplishing this, but in other ways, given the nature of their soteriological aim (which differs considerably from the aim of any modern Western philosopher), the ancient Mādhyamikas were surprisingly ingenious in their use of "propaganda, emotion, *ad hoc* hypotheses, and appeal to prejudices of all kinds"[15] to discredit the views of their contemporaries.

We, however, are not living in seventh-century India, nor do we share the presuppositions and prejudices of medieval Hindu society. We have our own ways of thinking and speaking, our own ideas, interests, and aims, our own form of life, shot through with the presuppositions and prejudices of neo-Kantian scientific rationalism.[16] Thus we cannot expect *on our own terms* to engage in effortless conversation with the Mādhyamika, as though it were simply a matter of matching the words and concepts of a seventh-century Sanskrit text with their counterparts in twentieth-century North American English. It is necessary to invest some real energy in preparing to meet these distant texts, and for this project we must be willing from the very beginning to reassess what we most take for granted. In moving from the vocabulary and topics which monopolize our present conversation to a new vocabulary and a new set of topics suggested by the Mādhyamika philosopher, we might begin by considering a number of problems also raised in the article on Wittgenstein cited just above, problems outlined in the following questions: "Why do we feel we cannot know something in a situation in which there is nothing it makes sense to say we do not know?"; "What is the nature of this illusion?"; "What makes us dissatisfied with our knowledge as a whole?"; "What is the nature and power of a 'conceptualization of the world'?"; "Why do we conceptualize the world as we do?"; "What would alternative conceptualizations look like?"; "How might they be arrived at?"[17] These last two questions are especially germane to our present purposes, for unlike Wittgenstein, the Mādhyamika goes so far as to develop his own alternative conceptualization of the world—a "conceptualization" which is "no conceptualization," but rather an alternative "form of life"[18]—and to suggest a specific path by means of which it might be actualized. In part 1 I pave the way for our reading of Candrakīrti's text by attempting to establish the relevance of his writing to problems crucial to our own time and place.

Mādhyamika scholarship in the West has made considerable progress during the past century. In spite of this progress or, perhaps more accurately, because of it, many of the basic themes of the Mādhyamika are now subject to more than one interpretation. There is, of course, no fault in this. On the contrary, the presence of this controversy should be taken as a sign that the issues involved are not of interest only to the philologist and the text-critical scholar, who are methodologically indisposed toward considering a text's meaning. Throughout part 1 and the notes which accompany the translation, I refer to these controversies and develop a consistent position on several key points of interpretation which form the nucleus of an approach to the study of the Mādhyamika that has recently been gaining favor among Western scholars. This is to be accomplished according to the following general principles.

First, I have begun at the beginning, with extended discussions of many of the most fundamental Buddhist doctrines. Wherever possible references to classical sources are linked with suggested translations in English, French, or German and with standard editions in the original languages. I have not tried to be exhaustive in supplying references, but otherwise I have endeavored to apply the historical and text-critical principles rightfully valued by Western Buddhologists. Much of the material presented in sections 2 and 3 will seem very basic to the specialist, but the linguistic interpretation developed throughout should interest anyone concerned with the hermeneutical problem of finding meaning in the Mādhyamika philosophy. What may not be entirely evident at first is that this is a holistic interpretation, that is, an interpretation which rests on an appreciation of all aspects of the Mādhyamika: intellectual, ethical, and practical. For this reason I have thought it best to leave nothing to chance and to build my argument from the ground up, demonstrating as I go how each of these three aspects influences and is in turn influenced by the other two.

In developing this holistic interpretation, it is obvious that I cross back and forth over the borders of several jealously guarded disciplines, each of them defended by a close-knit group of rigorously trained initiates. But then, this was considered necessary in view of the fact that the texts explicating the various systems of Buddhist thought have barely begun to be translated into Western languages, so that interpretation of this material has thus far remained, to a considerable extent, in the hands of a small circle of scholars who themselves devote years almost entirely to developing a mastery of the philological and text-critical tools necessary to specialize in Asian studies. As I indicated above, this seems to me an unfortunate situation, for despite the great accomplishments of the approved philologically based methodology, by giving it an exclusive claim as a hermeneutical strategy we have hindered our search for meaning in Buddhist literature. The problem is not whether to dispense with these valuable text-critical tools but how best to divest the philological methodology of its privileged claim to absolute hegemony in textual interpretation—without either losing touch with the texts or falling into an uncritical romanticism. My solution attempts to incorporate the accepted principles of text-critical scholarship while simultaneously rejecting the largely unstated presuppositions of "objectivity" that normally accompany them. Claims to methodological purity necessarily embody (and mask) a fundamental alienation from the objects of research to which they are applied. The question raised by philosophical hermeneutics forces itself upon scholars of Buddhist literature just as it has forced itself upon all scientists and humanistic scholars who are dominated by methodological preoccupations: Is it not likely that the understanding achieved by such "controlled alienation" will be an alienated understanding? "The text that is understood historically is forced to abandon its claim that it is uttering something true. We think we understand when we see the past from a historical standpoint, ie place ourselves in the historical situation and seek to reconstruct the historical horizon. In fact, however, we have given up the claim to find, in the past, any truth valid and intelligible for ourselves. Thus this acknowledgment of the otherness of the other, which makes him the object of objective knowledge, involves the fundamental suspension of his claim to truth."[19]

In designing this introductory study I have worked toward developing an understanding of the Mādhyamika as a cogent and viable response to a number of broadly based philosophical and religious problems. Accordingly, without abandoning the basic equipment necessary to any text-critical research, I have done my best to bring this discussion into the widest possible arena.[20] Such an approach presents several difficulties. A certain amount of critical apparatus may intrude upon the reader who is primarily interested in the philosophical and religious significance of Candrakīrti's thought, but the citations of Sanskrit fragments and particularly important textual variants, for example, should be of use to the philologist. On the other hand, my frequent references to the work of Western philosophers are likely to strain the attention of text-critical scholars skeptical of any sustained attempt to engage with the content of this literature by bringing it into the mainstream of modern philosophical conversation. My approach takes for granted the insights of Gadamer's concept of effective history. It has been dictated by an effort to follow through with some initial, tentative steps already taken by others in a direction that may eventually lead us beyond any of the present models for the study of Asian philosophy.

My second overriding concern has been to place Candrakīrti's work as much as possible within the wider context of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, for Mādhyamika philosophy cannot be properly understood when extracted from the matrix of its soteriological aims.[21] This is not a novel claim. It is more or less commonly acknowledged among Western scholars that we can expect only limited success from a strictly historical or philological study of Buddhist texts. J. W. de Jong, himself a highly respected philologist, reflects this understanding when he writes:

> In the past European orientalists have applied themselves especially to the history of Buddhism, as has recently been underlined by Eliade. Educated in the historical tradition of the nineteenth century, scholars believed they could learn all about Buddhism by studying its history. In the first place they tried to obtain a knowledge of the facts and data in order to form a picture of the development of Buddhist ideas. This method is doomed to failure because in the spiritual life of India the historical dimension is of much less importance than it is in Western civilization. The most important task for the student of Buddhism today is the study of the Buddhist mentality. That is why contact with present-day Buddhism is so important, for this will guard us against seeing the texts purely as philological material and forgetting that for the Buddhist they are sacred texts which proclaim a message of salvation.[22]

Ruegg corroborates Jong's opinion:

> Let me emphasize from the outset that the philosophical side cannot usually be divorced and treated entirely separately from the religious without a certain more or less arbitrary compartmentalization, for no hard and fast dividing line can normally be drawn between the philosophical and the religious in either India or Tibet. Indeed, the Sanskrit word *dharma* (Tibetan *chos*) covers a whole complex of ideas belonging to the philosophical, religious and sociological domains which can only be separated one from the other for the particular purposes of a given specialized analysis.
>
> It is, I think, correct to say that Buddhism was never exclusively either a purely moral teaching or some more or less "aristocratic" doctrine destined, in the framework of a satiated or pessimistic world view, to provide an escape from the ills and suffering of the world. It is rather a comprehensive soteriological teaching necessarily involving a philosophical foundation—which has a number of features in common with other Indian systems—and including an elaborate cosmology closely linked with the stages of meditation. In short, Buddhism is what is commonly referred to as a philosophy and a religion.[23]

I entirely agree with Ruegg here, though I think it necessary to call into question the presuppositions underlying any arbitrary separation of religious, philosophical, and sociological domains in the study of Buddhism. What kind of results can we expect from this sort of "specialized analysis," which by its nature is a distortion of the tradition it claims to interpret? This introduction to the Mādhyamika is predicated on a conviction that any attempt at understanding the texts must proceed through an effort to uncover our own presuppositions as well as those of the Indian and Tibetan authors. Any other approach is guaranteed to fail through not taking into account "the interest that is bound together with knowledge."[24]

Candrakīrti has made it quite clear that the sole purpose of the doctrine of emptiness and the entire Mādhyamika critique lies in its function as a means through which all sentient beings can find release from fear and suffering. The great significance this "purpose" or "application" *(prayojana)* holds for him is both explicit, insofar as he has stated it in several places, and implicit, in that the overall structure of his treatise reflects the ethical and practical aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This is not, however, simply a matter of apologetics, for independent of Candrakīrti's isolated remarks and the claims of the Mahāyāna tradition, a case can be made for the centrality of soteriological concerns strictly on the basis of an analysis of the Mādhyamika's approach to the problem of language and conceptual thought.[25] It will become apparent as we proceed that the Mādhyamika is a philosophy which relates ideas to action in a particularly subtle fashion. This is not accomplished by arguing against one view as "wrong" and in favor of another as "right," but by demonstrating through any available means that the very fact of holding a view—*any* view—keeps one enmeshed in an endless cycle of clinging, antipathy, and delusion.[26] If the Mādhyamika cannot be understood in this way—if we insist on interpreting these texts as a set of answers to epistemological or ontological questions—then we have missed the point. We shall produce a vast and solemn technical literature on the categories of truth, the ontology of dream states, and so forth, but we shall never appreciate the Mādhyamika's attempt to release us from our obsession with the search for one Truth and one Reality.[27] "Whoever makes a philosophical view out of emptiness is indeed lost"; held captive within the bonds of his own imagination, he forgets—or never begins to realize—that "a knot made by space is released only by space."[28]

SECTION TWO

CANDRAKĪRTI'S HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL CONTEXT

2.1 *The Entry into the Middle Way* as a Mahāyāna text

The distinction between Hīnayāna (Inferior Vehicle) and Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle) is one of those issues about which much has been written, while all too little is actually known. For our purposes it is best to avoid all reference to what has been said concerning the chronological and sociological implications of these terms, since it has become increasingly apparent that quite a few widely accepted opinions are based on indefensible premises. It is clear, however, that the Mādhyamika critique was specifically directed against an abstract, academic philosophy that had become divorced from the tradition of practical application. Still, we have no reason to suppose that this sort of scholasticism was characteristic of every non-Mahāyāna school even in Nāgārjuna's time,[1] and therefore the terms have been retained here as convenient labels for two different genres of literature. With this in mind, I wish to draw attention to a twofold distinction between the attitudes expressed by Indian Buddhist texts with respect to their particular ontological, epistemological, and soteriological concerns. In each case, *The Entry into the Middle Way* is on the side of the Mahāyāna.

Ontology. Hīnayāna texts are those which accept a sort of radical pluralism, analyzing all mundane experience into a precisely determined number of ultimately real, discrete atomic constituents, called *dharmas.*[2] The individual sense of subjectivity—the experience of a subjectively real "I"—is based on a composite of certain of these *dharmas,* and as such it is simply a reified concept associated with no ultimately real substance. The ontological position of Mahāyāna texts is most clearly viewed as a reaction to or critique of the Hīnayāna ontology. Within the Mahāyāna literature not only is the individual "I" reduced to a reified concept, but all aspects of everyday experience, both subjective and objective, are emptied of any ontological content, whether defined as "self" *(ātman)*, or as "intrinsic being" or "essence" *(svabhāva)*. The terminological distinction to be noted here is between the Hīnayāna preference for *dharma* and the particularly idiomatic use of the Mahāyāna expression *śūnyatā* (emptiness) as a synonym for *tattva* (reality).[3] Most contemporary scholars believe that the term emptiness refers neither to existence nor to nonexistence, and this is certainly the interpretation I favor.[4] It is a serious misnomer to identify the ontological position of Mahāyāna texts as a species of nihilism.[5]

Epistemology. The Hīnayāna position on epistemological issues finds its source in what might be called a naive realism with a metaphysical twist, for although everyday objects are not real, and therefore our sensory experience and our concepts are erroneous, still there is an objectively real ground to these entities, which is composed of the *dharmas* that are directly revealed to the meditator. From the Hīnayāna perspective, incorrigible, assertoric knowledge derives only from contact with these ultimately real atomic building blocks; all other forms of knowledge are based on illusion. The Mahāyāna position is considerably more complex and subtle, and because of the wide variety of scholastic writings on the subject, it is impossible to set forth a narrowly defined Mahāyāna epistemology. Of primary importance to all schools, however, is the system of multiple truths, which is given a particularly forceful interpretation by Candrakīrti.[6] According to his exposition of the doctrine, all means of knowledge are only "conventionally veridical," for in every case the act of knowing is contingent on the interdependence between knower and known. This interdependence vitiates all three components of any cognitive act, rendering both subject and object unreal as intrinsically existent entities; under normal circumstances the act of knowing itself is therefore unreliable.[7] As opposed to conventional truth *(vyavahārasatya)*, the truth of the highest meaning *(paramārthasatya)* must be realized through a means of knowledge not grounded in the rigid dichotomy established between reified concepts of subject and object. Knower and known are experienced as interdependent events within a larger matrix of other such transitory, constantly shifting events, through a way of understanding referred to as *prajñā* (wisdom), resulting in *advayajñāna* (nondualistic knowledge). Prajñā and *advayajñāna* are, however, best defined with reference neither to epistemological nor to ontological categories, but rather to what can be called an alternative conceptualization of the world[8] actualized in an attitude of nonclinging, an attitude engendered within the meditator who has completely internalized the Mādhyamika critique. This is the central theme of Candrakīrti's philosophy.[9]

Soteriology. By definition, Hīnayāna literature is concerned with the quest for individual liberation. Its ideal is expressed in the figure of the arhat (including both the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha),[10] who has transcended all possibility of rebirth, and in the concept of nirvāṇa, the final cessation of fear and suffering. Once again, the Mahāyāna position is perhaps most easily understood as a critique of the Hīnayāna ideal. The highest aim is here embodied in the career of the bodhisattva, who is motivated not from a desire to escape his own malaise, but from his immense compassion for the suffering of all living beings. Nirvāṇa, or individual salvation, is set aside as unworthy of the bodhisattva. The goal is now nothing short of full awakening—to become a buddha oneself—for the welfare of all sentient beings.

2.2 The bodhisattva ideal and the thought of awakening

The extremely powerful and heroic figure of the bodhisattva dominates the entire corpus of Mahāyāna literature, so much so that the Great Vehicle is often referred to as the "vehicle of the bodhisattvas" *(bodhisattvayāna).* More than upon anything else the bodhisattva ideal is built upon a truly imposing altruistic impulse. The most central characteristics of a bodhisattva are his overwhelming compassion for all living beings and his conviction that they must—each and every one of them—be rescued from all forms of fear and suffering. The bodhisattva aspires to be a buddha not in order to find his own salvation, but out of his concern for an infinite number of beings who must be shown the way out of the recurring pattern of conflict and misery.

The title *bodhisattva* is actually a compound of two Sanskrit words: *bodhi,* meaning "awakening," or, as it is usually translated, "enlightenment"; and *sattva,* "[a] being." Thus a *bodhisattva* is "an awakening-being," or more fluently *pace* Candrakīrti, "one who is determined to achieve awakening."[11]

Although the bodhisattva ideal plays a vital role in practically every Mahāyāna text, there are a few particular compositions in which the career of the bodhisattva is treated in considerable detail. Among these, in addition to the present treatise I might also cite as especially authoritative sources the *Bodhisattvabhūmi (BB),* the *Mahāvastu (MVA),* and the *Daśabhūmika (DB),* which was in all likelihood the locus classicus for the ten stages described in Candrakīrti's text.[12]

The prototype for the bodhisattva figure is very clearly none other than "our" historical buddha, yet the collection of Jātaka tales refer to as many as thirty-four other buddhas who are supposed to have preceded Śākyamuni.[13] According to the account preserved in the *Dīpankara Jātaka,*[14] at some time in the very remote past a certain monk named Sumedha achieved arhatship as the result of his dedicated religious strivings, and he was therefore destined to enter nirvāṇa at the time of death. During his wanderings, however, he happened to encounter the buddha Dīpaṅkara, and as the result of this fateful meeting he was inspired to renounce the immediate fruit of his immense efforts in favor of the vastly more significant goal of becoming a perfect buddha. This vow *(praṇidhāna)* to attain full awakening for the benefit of all living beings constitutes the first moment in the generation of the thought of awakening *(bodhicittotpāda)*, and from this time on, Sumedha was a bodhisattva. As the tale unfolds, Dīpaṅkara uses his supernormal powers to look into the distant future to a time and place where the bodhisattva Sumedha will finally become a fully awakened buddha known as Śākyamuni. A prophecy of success ensues, but the goal will still not actually be attained until the novice bodhisattva has experienced countless births as animal, human, and god. During this incredible period of time he will practice the ten perfections as he passes through the stages to buddhahood, until at last he will be reborn in the Tuṣita heaven, and from there he will go on to his final incarnation as a prince in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains.

2.3 The stages in the path to full awakening

All of the essential features of the bodhisattva ideal are present in this early Jātaka story, and each one is encountered again in Candrakīrti's *Entry into the Middle Way*, where the entire development of the bodhisattva's career is viewed as a series of progressive stages in the generation of the thought of awakening. In order to set Candrakīrti's work into the larger context of the literature which deals with this topic, I will give a short review of the general characteristics of this path, which leads from the state of an ordinary, worldly person *(pṛthagjana)* to the most sublime station of a perfect buddha. The bodhisattva ideal rests upon the premise that every living being has within it the potential of becoming a buddha, and this same premise underlies the entire edifice of Mādhyamika thought. According to what seem to be "the most ancient systematic doctrines concerning the career of a bodhisattva,"[15] we can speak of three major gradations in the generation of the thought of awakening.

The first of these precedes the actual bodhisattva vow, for at this point the future bodhisattva has not yet even conceived of becoming a buddha. Nevertheless, long before his formal vow to attain awakening, he belongs, in some sense, to the "family" *(gotra)* of the bodhisattvas. He is kind and considerate, and he embodies a certain predisposition toward compassion, which has been acquired over the course of countless previous births.[16] During this preliminary stage he lives in such a way as to accumulate the merit that will eventually lead him to conceive of the possibility of rescuing all living beings from suffering. Because of his naturally compassionate nature, he will not be likely to commit any act rooted in antipathy or hatred *(dveṣa),* but he is not immune to the influence of clinging or greed *(rāga).* It would seem that such an individual, with his innate concern for others, would not be inclined to pursue the goal of liberation for himself alone, as had the future buddha Sumedha in the *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka.* In some texts there is a suggestion that the bodhisattva is never seriously disposed to follow the path to arhatship; but he is not initially directed toward any particular spiritual goal *(aniyatagotra).*[17]

The second step is characterized by the first faint glimmerings of aspiration toward full awakening. The common person is still quite unrefined, but he is now anxious to be on his way, for he has first entered the vehicle of the bodhisattvas. His natural predisposition toward compassion is beginning to ripen into a self-conscious aspiration truly to serve all living beings, although at this point his thought of awakening is so faint that it can well be completely lost unless it is nurtured and encouraged to grow in the proper manner. This is accomplished in four ways: (1) by contemplating the example of the buddhas; (2) by reflecting on the faults and afflictions inherent in a life governed by strictly self-centered concerns; (3) by closely observing the miserable conditions in which all living beings are immersed; and (4) by cultivating a strong aspiration toward the attainment of the virtues of a buddha.[18] During this period he must concentrate on doing good, for despite his great feelings of compassion, his basic tendency is still directed toward self-aggrandizement at the expense of others. The reason for this is that his realization of emptiness is very slight, growing out of a mere inferential understanding of the teachings derived from study and careful reflection. He has yet to actualize this understanding through meditation and practice of the perfections.

Only a very few pass beyond this, but eventually some do succeed in purifying their aspirations so that they enter the first actual stage of the bodhisattva path, called "The Stage of Pure Aspiration" *(śuddhāsaya-bhūmi),* or simply "The Joyous" *(pramuditā).* Candrakīrti's account begins here.

With his ascent to The Joyous, the wayfarer on the path is no longer a common person, for the transition has been made to the status of a saint *(ārya),* from which there can be no retrogression. Preparation for becoming a bodhisattva is now complete, and the vow is taken to attain full awakening for the sake of all creatures. As Suzuki has indicated, "vow" is rather a weak term to convey the force of the Sanskrit *praṇidhāna,* which is actually "a strong wish, aspiration, prayer, or inflexible determination to carry out one's will even through an infinite series of rebirths."[19] The thought of awakening has by now become a fully conscious realization of the necessity to follow the path to perfect buddhahood.

Stages 1 through 7 are devoted to the active pursuit of the bodhisattva ideal; the eighth stage is called "The Immovable" *(acalā),* and it marks the shift to a qualitatively different aspect of the bodhisattva's career. The emphasis is then no longer on actualization of the thought of awakening, but rather on the nondualistic knowledge and higher mental faculties *(jñānābhijñānācarya)* indispensable to all buddhas.

These ten stages of the path correspond to a set of "perfections" which are the subject of chapters 1 through 10 in *The Entry into the Middle Way.* Candrakīrti has obviously emphasized the role of philosophical investigation in the larger context of the path, primarily because the Mādhyamika makes its unique contribution in this area. Nevertheless, the sixth stage, which deals with perfect wisdom *(prajñāpāramitā),* treats only one of a series of perfections, and each of the other stages represents an indispensable step in the bodhisattva's development. Moreover, wisdom is much more than the ability to render a formal interpretation of philosophical concepts.

2.4 The perfections of the bodhisattva's path

Both Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna are quite emphatic about the dangers of an incorrect understanding of the concept of emptiness,[20] and Buddhist teachers often remind their students that while mistaken beliefs concerning the intrinsic nature of empirical things are relatively easy to correct, like dousing a fire with water, if one begins to grasp at some sort of reified notion of emptiness, then it is as if the water intended to extinguish the blaze has itself caught fire. The chances of developing this sort of fatal misconception of emptiness as either "absolute being" or "unmitigated nothingness" are substantially enhanced if one relies entirely on intellectual powers of discrimination, and it is generally accepted that the most effective means to combat this danger is to cultivate an attitude of nonclinging from the very start, by following the full length of the path in all its theoretical and practical aspects.

As we shall discover in discussion of the two truths, reified concepts of intrinsic being *(svabhāva)* associated with the apprehension of an "I" or any other conceivable subjective or objective phenomenon must be unqualifiedly rejected. However, the "I" and all other empirical pheonomena are to be accepted or rejected solely on the basis of their causal efficacy, or lack of it, within the sociolinguistic nexus of conventional states of affairs. It is *clinging* that must be totally eradicated, and in order to accomplish this, one must first begin to distinguish, through a process of introspection, the illusory, reified concept of self from the strictly conventional or pragmatic notion of an "I" as the agent of mental, verbal, and physical activity. This kind of introspection certainly does not exclude the intellect's analytical powers, but it does embrace much more than intellect, since it rests on a balance of thought and action. All the features of the path outlined in Candrakīrti's text are intended to operate in harmony, each one reinforcing the others and contributing in its own way toward a total reconfiguration of one's form of life. Intellectual understanding evolves into the wisdom of personal experience, and verbal and physical action ripens into skillful means.

"Action," which here includes the practice of meditation and the other perfections, is both the outward, ritualized expression of an inward, spiritual condition or attitude and the determining factor in the formation of a person's future experience. In this sense, perhaps, we can begin to comprehend the peculiarly Indian notion of karma, for it is clear that we are constantly creating ourselves through the vector of our volitional acts.

Just as an artist develops the capacity to express himself freely and creatively in his work through mastery of technique, so in a similar way, through mastery of action, the bodhisattva cultivates the thought of awakening in a spirit of compassion and wisdom. The perfections Candrakīrti discusses are perfections precisely because they serve to integrate practical training and academic study of philosophy, or real and ideal. Each perfection is associated with its own stage in the path, and each of the first six is said to possess a dual nature which resides initially in its causal or mundane aspect, and secondarily in its potential for being transformed into a supramundane effect.[21] With respect to the first five perfections, this means that they are initially cultivated in reliance on their mundane capacity to function as causal links in the generation of perfect wisdom. There is, however, a second all-important quality to action inspired through the soteriologically oriented philosophy of the Mādhyamika critique. Such action is said to purify the mind by cleansing it of all reified concepts, and so to exterminate the very foundation of clinging.[22] When this process of purification is complete, the same practice of generosity, morality, patience, energy, or meditation is properly called a "supramundane perfection," and in this second sense it is not a cause but a fruit of wisdom.

SECTION THREE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE OF THE MĀDHYAMIKA

3.1 Sources for the study of Mādhyamika thought

The classical sources for study of the Mādhyamika philosophy are, for the most part, awaiting translation into English, although several of the more important treatises have been carefully edited and translated into either French or German.[1] The principal text of the school, Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakaśāstra (MS),* has been the subject of valuable studies by several distinguished Western scholars. Candrakīrti's famous commentary on this text has also been edited and partially translated into English, French, and German.[2] Aside from the corpus of Nāgārjuna's work, which is traditionally accepted as the authoritative source for all later Mādhyamika developments,[3] we also have a vast repository of technical writings in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese composed by later classical authors. So far these remain largely unedited and untranslated into any European language. Our two primary classical sources of historical information about the school are those of the Tibetan historians Bu ston and Tāranātha.[4]

As for modern studies, it would be nearly impossible to list all the books and articles that have been published during the past hundred years by Western Mādhyamika scholars, but many of the most valuable of these are cited in the bibliographies mentioned in note 1 to this section. For our purposes we need refer to only a few of these studies.

The history of Mādhyamika scholarship in the West can be viewed as a progression through three phases, each, it appears in retrospect, more sophisticated and sensitive than its predecessor.[5] The first was characterized by a nihilistic interpretation of emptiness and other key Mādhyamika concepts, a reading adopted by such prominent orientalists as A. B. Keith and Hendrick Kern.[6] These men were among the earliest Western scholars to attempt a systematic study of Buddhist philosophical texts, and they were confronted by a mountain of unedited manuscripts. In addition to having to deal with overwhelming linguistic problems, they, like any other scholars, were influenced by the prejudices and presuppositions of their time. It is not at all surprising that the doctrine of emptiness at first appeared to them not only as a total rejection of substance ontology, but far more significant, as a devastating assault on the very citadel of all ethical values, since from their perspective any concept of morality was necessarily rooted either in belief in an all-powerful creator God, or at the very least, in the concept of an ultimately real ground to all phenomena. What must have been most threatening was the Mādhyamika's radical critique of the entire rationalist project. Although the nihilistic interpretation has been twice superseded, the problem of relativism in connection with the linguistic interpretation is in a sense little more than a new incarnation of the same doubts and fears that plagued many nineteenth-century scholars.

Classical Mādhyamika authors emphatically rejected nihilistic interpretations of emptiness,[7] although it is clear that they viewed it as the most inviting and dangerous distortion of a deconstructive critique that depended exclusively on a reductio ad absurdum for its results. Again and again they admit that the doctrine of emptiness is frightening—and *ought to be* frightening for anyone who engages with it at an emotional and volitional level through meditation—because it lends itself so easily to nihilistic interpretations. As Nāgārjuna wrote in the *Ratnāvalī (RV):* "Beyond good and evil, profound and liberating, this [doctrine of emptiness] has not been tasted by those who fear what is entirely groundless."[8]

Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti would not have made nearly so much of the fearfulness of the Mādhyamika if it were actually just another absolutist system. Or, if emptiness were to be read as a synonym for the Vedāntic brahman, they would certainly have sought to allay the fear of emptiness with some reference to the underlying ground of all phenomenal experience. Instead they insist on pointing only more resolutely to the groundlessness of all experience, to "the emptiness of emptiness." They also recognized and acknowledged in their writings the possibility of an absolutist interpretation but, given the historical context in which they wrote—a period during which Buddhism had defined itself doctrinally and socially vis-à-vis the Hindu predilection for epistemological and ontological monism—they understandably did not perceive it as likely that such views would be attributed to the Mādhyamika. Nor did this happen until quite recently. Medieval Indian Buddhists could not have anticipated the social and intellectual forces that would come to bear on their doctrines almost two thousand years later.

The second phase of Western Mādhyamika scholarship dealt with what Candrakīrti might have called an "absolutist interpretation." Quite a few eminent names are associated with this phase, as well as some masterful studies, particularly those of the Russian scholar Theodore Stcherbatsky, who was convinced that the Mādhyamika was essentially a very sophisticated doctrine of monism explicating "transcendental or absolute existence."[9] A more recent example of the type appears in T. R. V. Murti's widely acclaimed study, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism.*[10] If Stcherbatsky represents the classical statement of the absolutist interpretation, then Murti is certainly its baroque—his Vedāntic/Kantian spectacles distort the Mādhyamika's message in a much more subtle and persuasive fashion than any nihilistic interpretation ever could, and for that reason have unfortunately done a great deal to prevent us from deepening our understanding of these texts. Once Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti are viewed as Murti suggests we view them—through the medium of Śaṅkara's and Kant's epistemological presuppositions—we are immediately stuck with all the old philosophical problems, related arguments, and counterarguments, which will never lead beyond themselves in the way Murti hopes. An example is his remarks on the subject of negation: "Negation itself is significant because there is an underlying reality—the subjacent ground. If there were no transcendent ground, how could any view be considered false? A view is false because it falsifies the real, makes the thing appear other than what it really is in itself. Falsity implies the real that is falsified. Phenomena are characterized as *saṁvṛti* because they cover the real nature of things."[11]

The problem with this kind of exegesis is not so much that it is wrong per se, but that it uses language in a way that Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti steadfastly refuse to. Thus it fails to engage with the deeper meaning these texts could have for us.[12] In asserting this "subjacent ground," Murti places himself and his reader in the mainstream of a philosophical debate including the entire range of Vedāntic vocabulary, which is consistently and very self-consciously avoided in early Indian Mādhyamika texts. As Wittgenstein would say, Murti is playing an altogether different language game. Let us briefly compare his use of language with Nāgārjuna's to get a feeling for the difference between these two distinct styles of expression. Where Murti asserts that "the real nature of things" is their "transcendent ground," Nāgārjuna writes: "Everything is real *(tathyam),* not real, both real and not real, and neither real nor not real: This is the teaching of the buddha."[13]

Murti's epistemological presuppositions demand justification for the Mādhyamika's use of reductio ad absurdum. Given these presuppositions, Nāgārjuna's unwavering rejection of all views can only be understood as an indirect reference to a proposition which cannot be forced into the words of the Vedāntic/Kantian language game. But is the lack of any such epistemological justification actually acknowledged as a fault anywhere in the Mādhyamika texts? In the *Vigrahavyāvartanī,* the Naiyāyika interlocutor[14] insists that the Mādhyamika's negation of the intrinsic nature of all things is an instance of petitio principii,[15] because his proposition would negate itself. Murti's only possible response to this charge—the only response consistent with his interpretation of the Mādhyamika—has already been noted. He must reject the accusation with a firm counterproposition, "Negation itself is significant because there is an underlying reality—the subjacent ground." Compare the response actually given by Nāgārjuna: "If I had any proposition *(pratijñā),* then this fallacy would be mine. I have, however, no proposition, and therefore I have no fallacy."[16]

Concern with justification for epistemological and ontological claims is part and parcel of the language game that Murti and the Naiyāyika realist cannot stop playing. Nāgārjuna, however, refuses to be coerced into joining the game, and he is therefore not constrained by its rules.

I do not wish to argue that Murti's interpretation is *wrong,* and that the Mādhyamika's language does not presuppose the Vedāntic absolute he finds there—I leave this, perhaps, to those who favor the nihilistic interpretation referred to above. My point is that it would be best if we simply ceased to talk about these texts in this way, for it leads nowhere. One cannot forge a meaningful link between this sort of language and the language and concerns relevant to every other dimension of our present intellectual and spiritual life. To use Kant as a hermeneutic for interpreting the Mādhyamika is perhaps the surest way to isolate Nāgārjuna's thought in a quaint Asian backwater, as fit for little more than historical and philological study and with nothing of importance to say to a culture that is struggling to free itself from a Kantian epistemology that has not led to any new or interesting insights for some time. Murti and other epistemologists (who need not, of course, refer explicitly to Kant) are suggesting that we go back to a period before Nietzsche and Heidegger, and their successors, whose work presents us with the possibility of understanding the Mādhyamika in a radically different way. In discussing James and Dewey, Rorty turns us in a more promising direction:

> They asked us to liberate our new civilization by giving up the notion of "grounding" our culture, our moral lives, our politics, our religious beliefs, upon "philosophical bases." They asked us to give up the neurotic Cartesian quest for certainty which had been one result of Galileo's frightening new cosmology, the quest for "enduring spiritual values" which had been one reaction to Darwin, and the aspiration of academic philosophy to form a tribunal of pure reason which had been the neo-Kantian response

> to Hegelian historicism. They asked us to think of the Kantian project of grounding thought or culture in a permanent ahistorical matrix as *reactionary.* They viewed Kant's idealization of Newton, and Spencer's of Darwin, as just as silly as Plato's idealization of Pythagoras, and Aquinas' of Aristotle.[17]

Murti's idealization of Nāgārjuna should be viewed in much the same way. The necessity for approaching the Mādhyamika with a more suitable hermeneutic is made clear once we sense the possibility of stepping away from the compulsive need to justify our interests through reference to some objectively valid epistemological or ontological criterion:

> If one abandons the Kantian distinctions, one will not think of philosophy as a matter of solving philosophical problems (for example, of having a theory of the relation between sense-experience and theoretical knowledge which will reconcile rationalists and empiricists, or a theory of the relation between mind and body which will reconcile materialists and panpsychists). One will think of it as a matter of putting aside the distinctions that permitted the formulation of the problems in the first place.[18]

I suggest that the Mādhyamika be read as a radical attempt at abandoning the obsession with a metaphysical absolute that dominated the religious and philosophical thought of post-Upaniṣādic India. This is by no means impossible if we use the sources available to us, something which has begun to happen as the absolutist interpretation is superseded by the third phase of interpretation.

The work of Murti and the other absolutists developed as a critique of the preceding, nihilistic interpretation and as an alternative to the problems inherent in it. Nevertheless, the authors of classical Mādhyamika texts—especially Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti—were adamant in their censure of both nihilism *(ucchedavāda)* and its opposite, the so-called absolutism *(śaśvatāvāda)* of the Hindu philosophers, which is considered nothing more than an elaboration of the reified concept of being that underlies every form of epistemological and ontological monism.[19] To identify emptiness with any form of absolute, transcendent ground is, in Candrakīrti's words, "as if a shopkeeper were to say, 'I have nothing to sell you,' and would receive the answer, 'Very well, then just sell me this —your absence of goods for sale.' "[20]

In retrospect, these first two phases may appear arrogant or facile, insofar as they either blatantly ignore or otherwise fail to come to terms with the classical Mādhyamika philosophers' explicit statements that the Mādhyamika is neither nihilism nor an extremely rarefied variety of substance ontology or epistemological monism.[21] We need to bear in mind that the writings of these scholars represent initial attempts at understanding a very subtle soteriological philosophy. A considerable amount of indispensable research has been done by them and, although it must be used cautiously, much of their work will no doubt retain its value for years to come.

The origin of the nihilistic interpretation is easily traced to the writings of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti. Both men made it a point to counter every argument designed to ground everyday experience in any sort of rationalist or idealist project, and only a very careful textual analysis will serve to distinguish such a deconstructive approach from the nihilist's absolute denial of existence, knowledge, and meaning.[22] In fact, the Mādhyamika's fellow Buddhists raised perhaps the most trenchant accusation against the *prasaṅgavākya:* "If everything is empty, then nothing comes into or goes out of existence. Consequently, for you even the four noble truths themselves do not obtain[23] . . . and by expounding [the emptiness of all things] you reject the three jewels [the buddha, the Buddhist teachings (the Dharma), and the monastic order (the saṅgha)]."[24] Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti responded to this grave criticism by asserting that their opponents misunderstood the doctrine of emptiness because they misunderstood its purpose *(prayojana).*[25] Its purpose, as stated by Candrakīrti, is to eradicate the innate tendency of conceptual thought to construct reified notions of being *(bhāva)* and nonbeing *(abhāva).* Such reified notions generate the philosophical positions referred to as absolutism and nihilism. Even more crucial, though, from the Buddhist perspective, is Candrakīrti's point that both of these theoretical positions are representative of exactly the sort of conceptual diffusion *(prapañca)* that lies at the root of clinging and antipathy and therefore all forms of fear and suffering.[26] This idea of purpose or application is the pivot on which Candrakīrti's philosophy and soteriology turn.

This brings us to the third phase of Mādhyamika scholarship in the West, which might best be identified as the "linguistic interpretation," developed in books and articles by Robinson, Streng, Daye, Thurman, Gudmunsen, Gimello, and several others. One of the great strengths of this interpretation is that it helps us to harmonize our understanding of the Mādhyamika with what the classical philosophers themselves had to say about their work, since it quietly sidesteps all the old epistemological and ontological problems. In this sense it is a radical departure from the previous two phases and a considerably more fertile approach to understanding the Mādhyamika's analysis of language and conceptual thought. Gimello has clearly described this advantage:

> Just as particular material forms lack ontological own-being, so all predications lack the linguistic equivalent of own-being—to wit, referential

> meaning. The Buddhist ultimate truth of emptiness is ineffable, then, but in a special sense—not because our words fall short of describing some transcendent reality called "emptiness," but because all words are such that they lack referential content or are "empty" of substantive meaning *(artha-śūnyaśabda)*. This holds despite appearances and the common usage of words. As there are really no determinate entities to be referred to, so words do not actually refer. Their indexical function is illusory, indeed it is one of the major fabricators of illusion. What is, and the emptiness thereof, will simply not submit to the language of determinateness. On the other hand there is no other kind of language. This no doubt accounts for the intractable character of the emptiness teaching and for its frequent misinterpretation.[27]

Gudmunsen's book, *Wittgenstein and Buddhism,* is the most comprehensive treatment of the theme to date, so I would like to review the essential features of his argument.[28] It appears that early Buddhist philosophers inherited from Sanskrit grammarians what could be called a correspondence theory of truth, embodied in the following proposition: "A sentence is true if it corresponds to a fact."[29] This is perhaps nothing more than a practical justification of normal linguistic behavior, but in the hands of a committed rationalist even the most innocent observation can be transmuted into the suggestion of transcendent being. Not only Hindu philosophers, but early Buddhist Ābhidharmika scholastics as well, seem to have operated on a largely unconscious premise extrapolated from this correspondence theory of truth, which can be summarized as follows: "If a simple expression has meaning, there is a corresponding simple object."[30] According to the linguistic interpretation favored by Gudmunsen, the Mādhyamika analysis can best be understood as a critique of this referential theory of meaning and the correspondence theory of truth which had preceded it. The critique operates on two interconnected levels, in a strictly polemical sense and in an edifying one.

The polemical function of the analysis is accomplished through its criticism of the inconsistencies inherent in any kind of metaphysical language, where the expression "metaphysical language" refers to any sort of linguistic behavior that purports to derive its meaning from a source outside the sociolinguistic community in which it occurs.

The edifying function of the analysis is fulfilled through its presentation of an approach to language and conceptual thought that is characterized as "nonreferential." This approach can be concisely set forth in the following way. First, the *truth value* of a collocation of words or concepts derives from its being used in a manner that may be seen as somehow consistent with the conceptual matrix of the sociolinguistic community in which it occurs. Second, the *meaning* of a word or concept derives from its application in some particular sociolinguistic community, and not from its reference to any necessarily private object.

This interpretation is not only advantageous for the reasons already mentioned, but also—and primarily—because it facilitates our appreciation of the Mādhyamika's system of the "two truths," which will be discussed in some detail below. If the meaning of a word or concept derives entirely from its usage in a historically bound social context, where it must be understood as indicative of a certain attitude toward some actual or possible state of affairs in the world, then any reference to an exclusively private object like a thing in-and-for-itself (a dharma) or an isolated, inviolate "I" (an ātman) would be senseless. Such private objects are *by definition* excluded from any sociolinguistic matrix. The linguistic interpretation allows us to appreciate this seminal insight captured in all of the Mādhyamika's central concepts: Metaphysical language is incapable of justifying its claim to capture truth in a complex of ontological and epistemological propositions, for the objects to which it refers are entirely without practical consequences and are thus devoid of all reality. Equally important, it should be noted that this analysis has the effect of drawing our attention away from names and named objects and fixing it squarely upon the context in which they occur and the relations that obtain between them.

3.2 Major figures in the development of Mādhyamika thought

Without a doubt, the central figure in all traditional accounts of the Mādhyamika—and on the basis of his extant writings, perhaps the most important Indian scholar of any persuasion—is the Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna, who lived sometime during the first few hundred years after Christ.[31] Nāgārjuna is generally regarded as "one of the very first and most original thinkers of the Mahāyāna,"[32] and yet we know almost nothing of his life.[33] I have already mentioned his *Madhyamakaśāstra*. His other most influential philosophical work is the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, a treatise of particular relevance for the linguistic interpretation. In addition to these and the four other texts mentioned in section 3, note 3, there are two other major compositions ambiguously attributed to Nāgārjuna: the *Akutobhayā*, a commentary on *MS*;[34] and the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, a vast compendium of Mahāyāna teachings that touches upon every aspect of the bodhisattva's path. Lamotte 1944-1980 presents a partial translation and detailed study of this treatise which is itself a monument of modern Buddhist scholarship, and the investigation done by Ramanan 1966 is a particularly sensitive and readable commentary on the whole of the Mādhyamika teachings. Still, notwithstanding these two fine achievements, the authorship of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* is a matter that remains unsettled. Two other figures are associated with the earliest period of Mādhyamika development. The first of these, Āryadeva, probably lived toward the end of the third century A.D. and on into the fourth; he is said to have been Nāgārjuna's disciple and the cofounder of the Mādhyamika.[35] Not one of his works seems to have survived completely in its original Sanskrit version, but all are apparently preserved in Tibetan translation. One of them, the *Catuḥśataka (CS),* is a long philosophical tract of great interest for its arguments against contemporary non-Buddhist philosophers, augmented by a lengthy commentary attributed to Candrakīrti. The other legendary personage of this period is a rather shadowy figure, Rāhulabhadra, known to us through traditional accounts variously as the teacher or the pupil of Nāgārjuna. Only fragments of his writings are presently available, as citations in other Mādhyamika texts.[36]

The next period of significant development for the Mādhyamika is dominated by Candrakīrti himself, and by references to another monk-scholar named Buddhapālita (ca. 500 A.D.),[37] who is unanimously attributed with only one work, a lengthy commentary on Nāgārjuna's *MS* entitled *Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti (MMV).*[38]

Very little is actually known about the life of Candrakīrti. He was doubtless the major force behind consolidation of what was much later identified as the Prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika, although tradition accords to his predecessor Buddhapālita the status of founder of this subschool of Mādhyamika thought.[39] At any rate, it was through the medium of Candrakīrti's writings that the Prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika received its classical statement. The Tibetan historian Tāranātha writes that Candrakīrti was born "in Samanta in the south of India . . . during the reign of King Śīla, son of Śrīharśa,"[40] which would indicate that he was active during the late sixth or early seventh century. Most modern scholars are willing to accept this estimate. Perhaps the most precise dates that can be assigned on the basis of the rather scanty available evidence are those suggested by Ruegg, ca. 600–650.[41]

Candrakīrti is supposed to have been a contemporary of the famous Sanskrit grammarian Candragomin, and Tāranātha tells us that the two scholars were in constant competition with each other.[42] It would seem that Candarakīrti was not only a brilliant philosopher but a rather difficult personality as well, for Candragomin apparently had a great deal of trouble with him. According to one account, the goddess Tāra went so far as to confide in Candragomin that Candrakīrti's work would be of limited use to others, since he was so proud of his scholarship.[43] Another rather curious report has been handed down to us concerning a "second Candrakīrti" who was supposed to have been a disciple of a tantric master named Nāgārjuna.[44] (This is not the Mādhyamika philosopher Nāgārjuna.) There is no other significant biographical information available on Candrakīrti.

The primary testimony to the life of Candrakīrti consists of the impressive list of works attributed to him by later Indian and Tibetan scholars.[45] His most famous composition is certainly *The Entry into the Middle Way* and its autocommentary *(bhāṣya).* However his commentary to Nāgārjuna's *MS,* the *Prasannapadā (PSP),* is also very well known both in the Indian and the Tibetan traditions. In addition to his philosophical treatises on the Mādhyamika and related topics, he is also credited with the composition of a number of tantric texts.[46]

The last great Mādhyamika philosopher of Candrakīrti's era was the master logician Bhāvaviveka (ca. 500–570).[47] He was the founder of the second major school of early Mādhyamika thought, the Svātantrika, and we possess a number of his writings in Tibetan translation.[48] Even in its earliest form, the Svātantrika system constitutes an imposing monument to rationalism, incorporating a complex series of logical formulas designed to substantiate Nāgārjuna's original philosophical impulse. Because of its apparent similarities in certain important respects to the absolutist interpretation, as well as its historical importance to the development of Mādhyamika thought, it would be useful to review the Svātantrika position.[49]

From the sixth through the eighth centuries the course of Mādhyamika development was determined by an ongoing debate between the Prāsaṅgika, chiefly represented by Candrakīrti, and the Svātantrika, championed by Bhāvaviveka. *The Entry into the Middle Way* reflects the central concern of this debate. While both schools accepted the ultimate validity of the emptiness doctrine, the Svātantrika held that this doctrine could be established most effectively by utilizing an extensive system of independently valid *(svatantra)* inferential judgments embodied in the tripartite syllogism of Indian philosophers, which consists of a proposition *(pratijñā),* a supporting reason *(hetu),* and a suitable example *(dṛṣṭānta).* The Prāsaṅgika maintained that this sort of syllogistic argumentation, even with the modifications introduced by Bhāvaviveka, is inappropriate in the service of the concept of emptiness, for "emptiness" is not to be sought after in the propositional structure of an inferential judgment.[50] According to the Prāsaṅgika, one must be led toward a gradual realization of emptiness solely by means of a critique directed against his own prejudices and presuppositions about so-called empirical experience and the arguments either consciously or unconsciously posited to support these preconceived ideas.[51] The Prāsaṅgika technique is accordingly a species of reductio ad absurdum whereby one moves step by step to become aware of the unforeseen consequences *(prasaṅgas),* or better yet, the inherent contradictions invariably present within any attempt at a priori justification of the presuppositions that give meaning and structure to every dimension of conventional affairs.

The Prāsaṅgika-Svātantrika debate was thus only tangentially concerned with the emptiness doctrine per se. Both sides agreed that all philosophical views *(dṛṣṭis)* must be rejected; the disagreement arose with respect to determination of the proper means for accomplishing such a nonpresuppositional or nonimplicative *(prasajya)* negation.[52] The essential issue which informed all the heated controversy, however, was actually a question as to the efficacy of reason itself: To what extent can logic be employed to serve the Mādhyamika's soteriological purpose? Bhāvaviveka argued that if the truth of the highest meaning *(paramārtha-satya)* could not be grounded in a rationalist methodology, then there would be no possibility of developing any cogent system of philosophy.[53] The truth of the highest meaning must be susceptible to rational interpretation, for otherwise there would be an unbridgeable rift between conventional truth and an eternally transcendent absolute (a consequence that would stand in direct conflict with the Mādhyamika's own concept of dependent origination). Candrakīrti responded by steadfastly rejecting Bahāvaviveka's rationalist convictions on the pragmatic grounds that any such appeal to abstract reason would inevitably undermine the soteriological purpose of the Mādhyamika critique. If used for anything other than strictly deconstructive aims—aims that are accomplished by accepting *an opponent's reasoning* only in order to turn it back on itself in a spiral of paradox and contradiction—logic can become a dangerous snare. It is in itself quite incapable of resolving the confusion which is generated by the attempt to apply conventional, dichotomized thinking to a task for which it is totally unsuited. As the crystallized essence of conceptualization, logic tends by its nature to engender the clinging and antipathy associated with reified thought. The Mādhyamika philosopher must not get caught up in and obsessed with the effort to manipulate syllogistic reasoning or any other conventional device. According to the Prāsaṅgika, one need only learn to observe patiently, with extreme care and devotion, the appearance of reality on which our commonsense assumptions are based, and in so doing the emptiness of all ontological and epistemological categories will reveal itself in these everyday appearances. Conventional truth is not to be reconciled with the soteriological truth of the highest meaning by grounding bits of language *(prajñaptis)* in an objective rationalist methodology, not only because such a project would actually strengthen clinging and antipathy, but also because the commonsense sociolinguistic world does not require any external, ahistorical point of reference—any "tribunal of reason"—to manifest the emptiness of its inherently contextual structure. Language is not grounded outside itself, but rather in its *use* or *application (prayojana):* "Indeed, words do not recoil on the speaker and make him dependent [on their objective meaning], like an animal trainer with a stick! On the contrary, in their circumstantial efficacy [words] are subject to the speaker's fundamental concern with communication. Therefore [the Mādhyamika] is not compelled to accept—as the sole result of the refutation of an opponent's proposition—the antithesis of the logical consequences he has exposed."[54]

The truth of emptiness must be realized in direct awareness of the paradox and mystery of all mundane experience, which need only be deconstructed through application of the symbolic forms of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy in study, critical reflection, and practical training.

3.3 History and doctrine of the Middle Way

Candrakīrti's text is called *The Entry into the Middle Way,* and the Mādhyamika philosophy is itself a mean *(madhyama)* between all extremes, a middle path *(madhyamamārga),* or a moderate course of action *(madhyamā pratipad).*[55]

The Middle Way represents first of all a characteristic attitude, rooted in a certain set of individual and social concerns, which shapes the motivation for one's actions in the world. Secondarily, it is indicative of a particular sort of deconstructive philosophy which endows the Mādhyamika with its paradoxical "non-position." This notion of a Middle Way is fundamental to all Buddhist teachings—it is in no sense the exclusive property of the Mādhyamika—yet it was given priority by Nāgārjuna and his followers, who applied it in a singularly relentless fashion to all problems of ontology, epistemology, and soteriology.

There is little question that the concept underwent a gradual evolution within the early history of Buddhist thought, and it received two important applications in Hīnayāṇa literature. Perhaps one of the best-known references to a Middle Way is found in the record of the buddha's first sermon at the Deer Park outside Varanasi, in the plains of northern India:

> Then the Blessed One addressed the group of five religious mendicants: "Mendicants, there are two extremes which should not be practiced by any person who has left society to find salvation. What are these extremes? On the one hand there is the realm of desire and the pursuit of pleasure which is in accord with desire—it is a base pursuit, boorish, profane, crude and without profit. On the other hand, there is the pursuit of self-mortification which is sheer misery, as well as crude and without profit.

> Mendicants, passing through these two extremes and avoiding them both is the Middle Way, object of the tathāgata's perfect awakening, opening the eyes and the mind, leading to peace, to omniscience, to complete awakening, and to *nirvāṇa.*"[56]

The Middle Way is very clearly defined here as a practical approach to the religious life, a prescription for the sort of behavior that will eventually lead to release from fear and suffering. Elsewhere we find evidence of a different conception of the Middle Way, a much more abstract application of the concept to ontological categories. The buddha is in this instance explaining the nature of "right view" to a wandering ascetic named Kātyāyana:

> Kātyāyana, everyday experience relies on the duality of "it is" and "it is not." But for one who relies on the Dharma and on wisdom, and thereby directly perceives how the things of the world arise and pass away, for him, there is no "it is" and no "it is not." "Everything exists" is simply one extreme, Kātyāyana, and "nothing exists" is the other extreme. The Tathāgata relies on neither of these two extremes, Kātyāyana; he teaches the Dharma as a Middle Way.[57]

This text is especially relevant to our present concerns since it is cited by Nāgārjuna in his *Madhyamakaśāstra* (15.7). In his commentary on the verse, Candrakīrti underscores its importance by reminding the reader that this particular scripture is studied in all the various Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools.[58] The avoidance of reifed concepts of being and nonbeing, that is, the Middle Way, is directly equated with the eightfold noble path,[59] and with the last of the four noble truths, the "path leading to the cessation of all suffering."[60]

The concept of a Middle Way obviously proved to be a very fruitful heuristic in early Buddhist literature, a device that could seemingly be exploited as an aid toward the explanation of virtually any important point of doctrine. One of the most crucial doctrinal issues for all Buddhists is, of course, the concept of selflessness *(nairātmya),* and here as elsewhere we encounter the all-pervasive influence of the Middle Way, this time interpreted by Nāgārjuna as the absence of any philosophical view—the "view" which is really no view at all: "The buddhas have indicated that there is a self, they taught that there is no self, and they also taught that there is neither any self nor any no-self."[61] The Mādhyamika's refusal to accept any proposition as absolutely binding is especially characteristic of Candrakīrti's thought, but as a universal philosophical hermeneutic, the nonview of the Prāsaṅgika finds its precedent in the writings of the master Nāgārjuna, who even went so far as to call into question the very existence of the buddha and his teachings.[62]

This central theme of a Middle Way is intimately connected with another fundamental Mādhyamika doctrine, the system of the two truths. The "two truths" are: (1) the truth of convention *(vyavahārasatya)* [= the truth of the screen *(saṁvṛtisatya)*]; and (2) the soteriological truth of the highest meaning *(pāramārthasatya)*. In a short tract titled *The Key to the Middle Way*, the fourteenth Dalai Lama explains the distinction between these two truths. And as with "emptiness" in the writings of Candrakīrti, it is important to note that once again the concept derives its meaning from its purpose in a very specific practical application:

> The purpose of knowing . . . the presentation of the two truths is as follows. Since it is utterly necessary to be involved with these appearances which bring about varieties of good and bad effects, it is necessary to know the two natures, superficial and deep, of these objects to which we are related. For example, there may be a cunning and deceptive neighbor with whom it is always necessary for us to interact and to whom we have related by way of an estimation of him that accords only with his [pleasant] external appearance. The various losses that we have sustained in this relationship are not due to the fault of our merely having interacted with that man. Rather, the fault lies with our mistaken manner of relation to him. Further, because of not knowing the man's nature, we have not estimated him properly and have thereby been deceived. Therefore, if that man's external appearance and his fundamental nature had both been well known, we would have related to him with a reserve appropriate to his nature and with whatever corresponded to his capacities, and so forth. Had we done this, we would not have sustained any losses.[63]

The system of the two truths is closely aligned with a hermeneutical tool based on the distinction between passages of definitive meaning *(nītārtha)* and those of nondefinitive meaning *(neyārtha)*, which are necessarily in need of further interpretation in order to be properly understood.[64] Conventional truth is the subject of statements which fall into the first category, while the truth of the highest meaning is expressed in paradoxical, albeit "definitive," statements like those of Nāgārjuna cited just above. Eventually it was deemed most accurate, from the perspective of the Middle Way, not only to deny that the buddha ever existed, but to deny that he did not exist, that he both existed and did not exist, and, of course, that he neither existed nor did not exist.[65] This tetralemma *(catuṣkoṭi)* is the classic formula of the *prasaṅgavākya* set forth in 6.8cd of *The Entry into the Middle Way*, at the beginning of an analysis of production.

The force of this deconstructive formula can be appreciated if we look back to the discussion of the nonreferential approach to language and conceptual thought. There I pointed out that according to the Mādhyamika analysis, objects presented in the context of everyday experience are neither real nor unreal, neither existent nor nonexistent, and that ultimately nothing at all can be said concerning their ontological status. However, as Wittgenstein has observed, the referent of a word "is not a *something,* but not a *nothing* either. The conclusion was only that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said."[66] For the soteriological purposes of the Mādhyamika, however, it was necessary ultimately to dispense with all references to both a *something* and a *nothing.*[67]

When the Mādhyamika philosophers consistently refuse to use words and concepts as though they drew their meaning from association with an intrinsically existent "private object," they not only provide a de facto solution to any intellectual problems of ontology or epistemology that focus on such abstract, hypothetical entities, but more important, a philosophical bulkhead is established from which they can mount an all-out attack on the essentially emotive or volitional problem of *clinging.*[68] When this new attitude toward language and conceptual thought is harnessed to the practice of balanced concentration, the meditator reaches a point where he begins to see clearly—by "not seeing"—the lack of a fixed substratum underlying any experience. And where there is no object to be grasped at—no ground whatsoever—there is no basis for clinging or antipathy, and the mind is naturally at peace. Here one realizes the truth of the highest meaning, the actualization of emptiness, the cessation of all fear and suffering. On the other hand, words and concepts used for strictly practical purposes do possess a very definite semantic content, and that content is totally exhausted within the sphere of the sociolinguistic context where they are used. "Meaning" and "reality" are defined only in conventional terms, with reference to nothing more nor less than the thoughts and feelings, the conversations and activities, that together make up all that there is to life.[69] This is the second of the two truths, the conventional truth of everyday experience, which must be seen exactly as it is *(yathābhūtam)* in the full context of its interpenetrating relations, in order that one might begin to eliminate the problem of clinging.

Any attempt to ignore or transcend everyday life in favor of some metaphysical concept of objectivity is inherently meaningless and doomed to failure. Yet everyday, practical experience is constantly invoked by the Mādhyamika "not on account of its value, but rather on account of its ultimate inconsistency, or more precisely, because of the ultimate inconsistency which is its only value."[70]

The truth of the highest meaning takes its reality only through being projected onto the screen *(saṁvṛti)* of conventional truth. Recognition of the strictly contextual or pragmatic significance of the thoughts and objects that populate our mental and material world renders meaningless any search for a transcendental ground behind these phenomena. But paradoxically, by stripping away the tendency to reify the screen of everyday affairs, this same recognition simultaneously lays bare the intrinsic nature of all things, which is their "suchness" *(tathatā),* their quality of being just as they are in reciprocal dependence. What is immediately given in everyday experience is indeed all that there is, for the inherently interdependent nature of the components of this experience *is* the truth of the highest meaning: both the means to the goal *(mārga; upāya)* and the goal itself *(nirvāṇa).*[71]

In this way a holistic interpretation of conventional truth provides the necessary means for the actualization of emptiness. As intellectual appreciation of the Mādhyamika's approach to language and conceptual thought grows deeper and begins to take root in experience, it becomes manifest in an attitude of nonclinging, which is by definition in complete accord with the soteriological aim of the truth of the highest meaning. The academic study of philosophy plays a critical role in developing this immediate awareness of things "as they are," but according to the textual tradition, any study of deconstructive philosophy is significant only to the extent that it contributes to formation of an attitude of nonclinging, and such an attitude is both cultivated and revealed in the most unpretentious or obviously ritualistic activities. Nāgārjuna, the master dialectician of the Mādhyamika, himself composed very moving devotional poetry, and legend has it that the entire Far Eastern traditions of Ch'an and Zen are founded on one sermon of the buddha, in which he did nothing but silently offer a single flower to the assembly of monks.

3.4 Major philosophical themes of *The Entry into the Middle Way*

I have discussed the broader context of Candrakīrti's work and the significance of his writing within the Mādhyamika tradition. The Mādhyamika, or Middle Way, has its roots in a very ancient Buddhist doctrine. Before going on to review the contents of *The Entry into the Middle Way* in greater detail, there are three important themes which should be explained, since they act as a sort of leitmotif for Candrakīrti's text. All three of them are introduced in the following passage from the *Prasannapadā:*

> A carriage is designated in dependence on its parts, the wheels and so forth. Whatever is designated in dependence on its own parts is not produced through any intrinsic being, and nonproduction through any

> intrinsic being is emptiness. Emptiness, defined as nonproduction through any intrinsic being, is itself the Middle Way. That which is not produced through any intrinsic being cannot possibly be existent, and yet because it lacks nonbeing neither can it be nonexistent. Therefore, on account of its avoiding the two extremes of being and nonbeing, emptiness, defined as nonproduction through any intrinsic being, is called the Middle Way, or the Middle Path. So it is that the following expressions are various synonyms for dependent origination: "emptiness," "dependent designation," and "the Middle Way."[72]

It should be evident that none of these themes is completely new. They are closely intertwined insofar as each applies to some particular facet of the doctrine of the Middle Way: "dependent origination" *(pratītyasamutpāda)* focuses primarily on ontological problems, and especially on the problem of causality; "dependent designation" *(prajñaptir upādāya)* deals with epistemological problems and with the Mādhyamika's approach to language and conceptual thought; and "emptiness" *(śūnyatā)* is perhaps the most charged term in the entire range of Mādhyamika technical vocabulary, a word so vibrant and rich in associations that it brings together all the most vital aspects of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy.

3.4.1 Dependent origination *(pratītyasamutpāda)*

The problem of causation must be accounted for by any system of thought which aspires toward a comprehensive ontology, and ancient Indian philosophers are not alone in their search for a solution to questions posed by the very special and intimate relationship that obtains between a cause and its effect. A survey of the history of Western attempts to deal with the issue of causation serves only to augment the air of mystery that surrounds this most mundane phenomenon:

> It is apparent that some of the main philosophical problems of causation do not yield to an easy solution. The idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect may be, as Hume thought, an esoteric and metaphysical one, but it is doubtful whether anyone can render an adequate analysis of the causal relation without it. The idea of causal power or efficacy is perhaps more esoteric still, and yet there is no obvious way of eliminating it from the concept of causation. Considerations of means and ends or of time do not help to eliminate this concept. If, however, one professes to find no difference between the relation of a cause to its effect, on the one hand, and of an effect to its cause, on the other, he appears to contradict the common sense of mankind, for the difference appears perfectly apparent to most men, even in cases where neither cause nor effect can be represented as a means or end and even when both occur contem-

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> poraneously. Here, then, as in so many areas of philosophy, our advances over our predecessors appear more illusory than real.[73]

The Mādhyamika philosopher would certainly sympathize with his European or American counterpart, mired in a singularly intractable problem; and he would doubtless admire the rigorous methodology which our Western tradition has forged in the course of its investigation. In fact, Candrakīrti would heartily applaud any effort to avoid contradicting "the common sense of mankind," and he would as well agree with Hume, given certain qualifications, that "the idea of a necessary connection between cause and effect" is "an esoteric and metaphysical one." Concerning this last point, however, we must be very careful, for the similarity between the two men as regards the value placed upon "common sense" and the degradation of "esoteric ideas" is more apparent than factual. At any rate, Candrakīrti is, in at least one sense, more willing to accept the consequences of Hume's skepticism than is Hume himself, for the Mādhyamika philosopher is prepared to concede to the force of pragmatic demands as entirely sufficient for definition of the cause-effect relation. As he writes in *The Entry into the Middle Way,* "If a cause produces its requisite effect, then, on that very account it is a cause. If no effect is produced, then in the absence [of any effect], the cause does not exist."[74]

What is most striking here is the difference in attitude which distinguishes one tradition from the other in its idea of what constitutes a philosophical problem. The Mādhyamika can rest content with this very practical definition of causality because he has dispensed with the presupposition that philosophers should be able to discover a more satisfying theoretical explanation for what is universally accepted at face value in the context of everyday experience. He feels no compulsion to go beyond this uncompromisingly practical account; to him the unending search for something more than pragmatic justification is fundamentally misguided, in that it is vitiated by an unexamined, and unwarranted, premise: Why presuppose that causation must necessarily be predicated upon some a priori, abstract "connection" between a cause and its effect? Why must the task of philosophy be restricted to this continuing search for a transcendental locus of meaning and existence—some "necessary connection," "substance," "power," "essence," "logical form," or the like—through which the constituents of everyday experience might be brought together into some kind of significant whole? Could it not be that the only legitimate philosophical work is over and done with when all problems are shown to be practical problems, and when the paradoxical nature of the everyday world has been shown to be entirely self-sufficient as revealed in all actual and possible states of affairs? This basic problem of causality was summarized by Nāgārjuna in *MS* 20.19: "It certainly is not the case that cause and effect are identical, nor, indeed, are they different."[75] Given the same dilemma of causality, compare the response of many Western philosophers with the Mādhyamika's response as provided by Candrakīrti: "Because we maintain that both [cause and effect] are like magical illusions, therefore we are subject to no [logical] fallacy, and the elements of everyday experience are left intact." "Do not lose touch with the screen taken for granted in the context of everyday experience."[76] There is here no attempt to get behind or under everyday experience to a transcendental substratum. Such an attitude is not altogether lacking among Western philosophers, however. Indeed, since Nietszche several important movements have developed in the West seeking to avoid entirely the problem of causation as it presented itself to earlier philosophers steeped in Descartes's thought and Kant's epistemological presuppositions. As early as 1903 A. E. Taylor anticipated what was to come when he drove a wedge between nineteenth-century rationalism and conventional everyday experience:

> Regarded as a universal principle of scientific procedure, the causal assumption must be pronounced to be neither an axiom nor an empirical truth but a postulate, in the strict sense of the word, i.e., an assumption which cannot be logically justified, but is made because of its practical value, and depends upon the success with which it can be applied for conformation. . . . It is a postulate which experience may confirm but cannot prove.[77]

Only seven years later William James published *The Meaning of Truth,* in which he completely sidestepped the philosophical problem of causality with his "pragmatic" definition of truth:

> "Grant an idea or belief to be true," [Pragmatism] says, "what concrete difference will its being true make in any one's actual life? What experiences [may] be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? How will the truth be realized? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?" The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.[78]

The implications of James's pragmatic definition of truth for the problem of causality are made clear only a few pages further on in his preface, where he lays down the ground rules for a new doctrine of "radical empiricism":

> Radical empiricism consists first of a postulate, next of a statement of fact, and finally of a generalized conclusion.
>
> The postulate is that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience. [Things of an unexperiential nature may exist *ad libitum,* but they form no part of the material for philosophic debate.]
>
> The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves.
>
> The generalized conclusion is that therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure.[79]

James was well aware of the obstacles his pragmatism would encounter in the prevailing rationalist belief "that experience as immediately given is all disjunction and no conjunction, and that to make one world out of this separateness, a higher unifying principle must be there."[80] The necessity for "categories of relationship" is built into the rationalistic/idealistic way of looking at things that James wanted to leave behind, and the prototypical category—the archetype of all relationships—is the truth-relation, "which connects parts of reality in pairs, making of one of them a knower, of the other a thing known, yet which is itself contentless experientially, neither describable, explicable, nor reduceable to lower terms, and denotable only by uttering the name 'truth.' "[81]

I have cited James at length here because his pragmatic definition is to a very great extent compatible with the Mādhyamika's analysis of truth as a function of what can be put into practice—what can be embodied in the thoughts, words, and actions that go to make up a form of life. I shall have more to say about this Buddhist concept of truth in a moment, but first we need to examine more closely the Mādhyamika's own approach to the riddle posed by causality, as expressed in the words of the fourteenth Dalai Lama:

> If phenomena were not empty of a fundamental basis or of inherent existence, it would be utterly impossible for the varieties of phenomena to be transformed in dependence on causes. If they existed by way of their own fundamental basis, then no matter what type of entity they were, good, bad, and so on, how could they be changed? If a good fruit tree, for instance, were inherently existent by way of its own entity or its own inner basis, how would it be true that it could become bare and ugly? If the present mode of appearance of these things to our minds were their own inner mode of being, how could we be deceived? Even in the ordinary

> world many discrepancies are well known between what appears and what actually is. Therefore, although beginninglessly everything has appeared as if it were inherently existent to the mind that is contaminated with the errors of ignorance, if those objects were indeed inherently existent, their inner basis would be just as they appear. In that case, when the consciousness searching for the inner basis of a phenomenon performed analysis, that inner basis would definitely become clearer. Where does the fault lie, that when sought, phenomena are not found and seemingly disappear?[82]

The fault, as far as the Mādhyamika is concerned, lies in an unshakable tacit commitment to the a priori principle that the interaction between cause and effect is an interaction between two discrete, intrinsically existent entities. The search for a "necessary connection" linking a cause with its effect is, like the search for the archetypal "truth-relation" itself, no objective, value-free philosophical enterprise. On the contrary, from the Mādhyamika's perspective it appears as a blind groping for justification of the unacknowledged presupposition that truth "connects parts of reality in pairs." And whether these pairs be cause and effect, knower and known, subject and object, or any other dichotomy, this presupposition preserves at its core a kernel of contamination—the spiritual ignorance *(avidyā)* embodied in the mind's inherent tendency to reify all experience into "things" that can be grasped at and possessed by an "I" that is itself only another fragmented, intrinsically existent thing: "Those who teach that the 'I' and objective things possess individualized reality cannot be considered to know the [buddha's] teaching."[83]

The question posed by the Mādhyamika is in this respect very similar to the question implicit in James's pragmatism: Which is more salutary, to press on in this way by weaving an endless series of abstruse arguments, in the hope of retrieving some solid justification for this presupposition of a metaphysical reality behind the appearance of everyday affairs, or simply to abandon the presupposition altogether and accept everyday, practical considerations as sufficient unto themselves?[84]

There is a very large catch here, of course, and it is a catch which has not been directly addressed by James or any of his followers, though it forms an integral part of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy. According to the Mādhyamika, even if one should be persuaded in favor of the second, "pragmatic," option and sincerely desire to abandon this endless quest for an objectively valid, rationalistic account of causation and truth, only then will he begin to discover just how strong is his commitment to a substance ontology which is built into the search, how far its influence stretches beyond the intellect, and how deeply it penetrates into emotive and volitional realms. The extent of the problem may be perceived by considering what Feyerabend has written about the intimate relationship between "concept" and "sensation": "We can now distinguish between sensations and those 'mental operations which follow so closely upon the senses,' and which are so firmly connected with their reactions that a separation is difficult to achieve. Considering the origin and the effect of such operations, I shall call them *natural interpretations.*"[85]

Just how much of the intellectual history of the East and of the West has been structured by the search for a priori justification of these natural interpretations, and the extent to which this search (like "natural interpretations" themselves) is built into the fiber of our mental, emotional, and volitional being, may be judged from Feyerabend's continuing analysis of the role that they play not only in extracurricular activities like science and philosophy, but in everyday life as well:

> It was Bacon's belief that natural interpretations could be discovered by a method of analysis that peels them off, one after another, until the sensory core of every observation is laid bare. This method has serious drawbacks. First, natural interpretations of the kind considered by Bacon are not just *added to* a previously existing field of sensations. They are instrumental in *constituting* the field, as Bacon says himself. Eliminate all natural interpretations, and you also eliminate the ability to think and to perceive. Second, disregarding this fundamental function of natural interpretations, it should be clear that the person who faces a perceptual field without a single natural interpretation at his disposal would be *completely disoriented,* he could not even *start* the business of science [or philosophy!]. The fact that we *do* start, even after some Baconian analysis, therefore shows that the analysis has stopped prematurely. It has stopped at precisely those natural interpretations of which we are not aware and without which we cannot proceed. It follows that the intention to start from scratch, after a complete removal of all natural interpretations, is self-defeating.[86]

The perception of causality, and the corresponding elements of our observational language—the words *cause* and *effect,* certainly embody an extremely basic natural interpretation that we can hardly expect to dispel. Indeed, we cannot even quite imagine what it would *mean* to do without the awareness of this most fundamental relationship. And yet, by gaining insight into the psychological and social mechanisms that support our thoughts and perceptions, we might be able to surrender the obsession to search for an a priori justification of causality and an objective, rationalistic definition of truth. And if this insight were to go deep enough into the wellsprings of our emotional and volitional being, we might eventually find that everyday life would be transformed into something quite different from what it is at present. Wittgenstein seems to have recognized such a possibility, which is one reason for the aura of mysticism commonly felt to surround his writing: "The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. —The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* into question."[87]

The ultimate justification for the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy does not lie in any claim to a monopoly on objective, value-free truth, but in a very pragmatic sense of purpose: the desire to bring an end to clinging, antipathy, and delusion. It is not only professional philosophers who are so tightly bound by the innate reifying tendency of conceptual thought. As Candrakīrti writes in *The Entry into the Middle Way,* "Even though [things] are not in reality produced . . . they do serve as objects that are perceived in the context of everyday experience. . . .[88] Therefore the master declared that all things are from the beginning at peace, devoid of production and, by virtue of their intrinsic nature, completely unentangled in suffering."[89] The role of philosophy is here very clearly defined in soteriological terms. The investigation of everyday experience is taken to be conducive to one particular aim, and this aim could never be fully realized in any strictly formal rationalist or idealist account of truth: "The analysis in the [*Madhyamaka*]*śāstra* is not conducted out of fondness for debate—it teaches about the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] for the purpose of liberation."[90]

Recognition of the importance of causation as an entirely pragmatic concern is, like so much of the Mādhyamika, simply an extension of what is, properly speaking, a pan-Buddhist attitude to philosophy. The second noble truth explained by the buddha sets forth the cause of suffering, and a very ancient verse is traditionally held to summarize the whole of his teachings: "The tathāgata has told the cause of things that originate through causes, and their cessation as well the great mendicant explained."[91]

In Pāli literature the concept of dependent origination is expounded in the form of a detailed analysis of the causal mechanism underlying transmigration. Within the Mahāyāna it receives a much broader interpretation incorporating a general critique of the problems inherent in any substance ontology. In these texts dependent origination is presented as a universally valid, pragmatic interpretation of causality. This distinction is in general accord with the doctrinal differences characteristic of these two branches of Buddhist thought. For our purposes, the essential features of the Mādhyamika notion of dependent origination and its extension to the problem of causality can be highlighted in an explanation based on the system of the two truths:

(1) *The truth of the highest meaning:* That which exists within a nexus of cause and effect cannot be real in and of itself (that is, its individual existence cannot be grounded outside the context of everyday experience).
(2) *Conventional truth:* The sole criterion for empirical reality is existence within the nexus of cause and effect which defines our shared sociolinguistic experience, constituted by all the states of affairs that have already come to pass or may at any time in the future come to pass.

Over the course of the next few pages I shall expand on these two principles of dependent origination and examine some of their implications for Mādhyamika thought.

(1) *That which exists within a nexus of cause and effect cannot be real in and of itself (that is, its individual existence cannot be grounded outside the context of everyday experience).*

This first principle has very subtle and far-reaching ramifications within the Mādhyamika system, where it is bound up with the particularly abstruse concept of *svabhāva.*[92] Candrakīrti defines *svabhāva* as follows: "Whatever is possessed by fire or anything else that is never produced because it is not dependent on anything other than itself and because it is not artificially fabricated, that is *svabhāva.*"[93] Within the Mādhyamika system, the word *svabhāva* denotes the fundamental natural interpretation that finds expression in both the conception and the perception of individuality. As used by the authors of Mādhyamika texts the term has two distinct but related connotations: intrinsic being, and intrinsic nature.

Svabhāva as intrinsic being. The concept of intrinsic being is, according to Candrakīrti, the reified concept of "relative being," which is itself nothing more than "being as opposed to nonbeing." The concept of relative being accords with the practical demands of everyday experience, where the absence of, for example, a pot implies its presence in some other time or place. The reified concept of intrinsic being is, however, an abstraction, a metaconcept extrapolated from these practical demands and then laid back over them as an interpretive grid. Thus the same natural interpretation is capable of simultaneously generating two very different sets of concepts and perceptions, each of which is colored with its own emotional and volitional force. Whereas the first of these, associated with the concept of relative being, is spiritually benign, the concept of intrinsic being is associated with a form of life contaminated by aversion and clinging. The concept of intrinsic being operates as the unexamined presupposition behind idealist and rationalist philosophies and, drawing on the power of the natural interpretation at its core, it serves as a filter for all of everyday experience, exerting a profoundly detrimental influence on both the individual and society.

Svabhāva as intrinsic nature. Intrinsic nature is synonymous with relative being as described above. Nothing exists in and of itself, which is simply another way of saying that nothing possesses intrinsic being. On the other hand, subjective and objective phenomena are in possession of an intrinsic nature which accounts for their existence in the world. This intrinsic nature is an expression of the way in which they are related to each other, and it is manifest through their participation in the nexus of cause and effect that characterizes all of everyday experience. The Mādhyamika refers to this way of being as "dependent origination."

This brings us to the second of the two principles of dependent origination:

(2) *The sole criterion for empirical reality is existence within the nexus of cause and effect which defines our shared sociolinguistic experience, constituted by all the states of affairs that have already come to pass or may at any time in the future come to pass.*

The nexus of cause and effect is itself what is denoted by the expression *dependent origination.* Any conventionally real "thing" (that is, any dharma, either a concept or an external sense object) is necessarily an effect, with reference to its cause, and a cause, with reference to its effect(s). Nothing can possibly escape this configuration. Where there is a cause, there must be an effect, and where there is an effect, there must in turn be a cause.[94] This is true in both an ontological and an epistemological sense, for the concepts of "cause" and "effect" could themselves have no meaning outside their relationship with each other, and this naturally holds for any other pairs of concepts as well. In this way the Mādhyamika finds that both ontological and epistemological problems can be meaningfully defined only in a context of reciprocal dependence. And as the implications of this very nontranscendental, pragmatic analysis begin to seep downward into the level of natural interpretations, where they absorb their own emotional and volitional significance, the things of the world are revealed as they are in the totality of their relations with each other.[95] The way in which this is accomplished can be appreciated only by taking into account the entire system of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy in its intellectual, practical, and ethical dimensions.

3.4.2 Dependent designation *(prajñaptir upādāya)*

Within the context of everyday affairs valid concepts and percepts are defined as those which are suitable for practical purposes. According to the Mādhyamika, it is meaningless to expect anything more than this from the processes of conceptualization and perception. The objects of veridical perception are granted a sort of de facto existential status. The power of conceptual thought lies in its intimate connection with perception, in its capacity to influence one's percepts, and therefore to influence one's attitude toward the objects revealed through sense perception. For the Mādhyamika, epistemological truth is firmly lodged in veridical sense perception.[96] Both the validity of a concept and the truth of a proposition are derived from their application within the context of mundane affairs so as to achieve a more or less specific purpose, both as an expression of one's own attitude and experience, and as a factor in the modification of the attitudes and experiences of others.[97]

Although objects appear to be entirely independent and self-contained, it is clear that the relationship between concept and percept is in some important sense reciprocal. For this reason, when the interface between conceptual thought and perception becomes more fluid than normal, a new object can be "found" or "created." Consider, for example, the invention of the wheel: Did any wheel *exist* previous to the first moment when some particular circular-shaped stone was identified in terms of its potential use as a wheel, or before some clever Stone Age technician first carved a large rock so that it conformed to his new concept "wheel"? Under such circumstances, what would it mean to assert either that a wheel *did* or *did not* exist? The Mādhyamika philosopher, in accordance with his radically holistic approach to such philosophical problems, would maintain that the existence of any actual wheel is dependent on the concept "wheel." This does not imply that the empirical wheel is totally unreal or imaginary; it simply suggests that its existential status is tightly bound up with the fact of its being deeply enmeshed in the interrelations between conceptual thought and perception. Candrakīrti explains this as follows:

> A reflection that is mere designation is founded on a collocation of [causes and conditions] including the face and other things which themselves exist as mere designations; a house is designated as dependent on its beams and other structural components which are also mere designations; and a forest is similarly designated as dependent on trees. Just as in a dream one apprehends a sprout that is not produced in and of itself *(svabhāvataḥ)*, so it is equally reasonable that no entity exists apart from its own designation; and this designation is founded on [a collocation of] other entities which are themselves mere designations.[98]

Not all concepts are associated with valid sense perceptions, however, and certain of them are effectively stillborn, by their nature unassociated with any percept. A concept is defined as invalid by any one of three criteria.[99] (1) It is formally inapplicable. Such a concept is invalid because it necessarily entails a logical contradiction, as, for example, "the son of a barren woman." (2) It is misapplied. Any concept associated with faulty sense perception is circumstantially invalid. (3) It is empirically inapplicable. Concepts that do not suggest any possible application are invalid. "In short, it is said that though there is no phenomenon that is not posited by the mind, whatever the mind posits is not necessarily existent."[100]

The third category mentioned above can be further divided into two subcategories. In the first subcategory, a possible application is absent because of extraneous factors such as an apparent lack of material or means. The second subcategory contains concepts that exclude any possible application by virtue of their inner constitution. Such concepts are not only invalid but spiritually harmful, because they contribute directly to the formation and maintenance of a profoundly impractical attitude toward everyday experience that must invariably result in frustration and despair. The inherent tendency of the mind to generate such concepts is referred to as "conceptual diffusion" *(prapañca),* and, as Candrakīrti tells us, the sole purpose of the Mādhyamika analysis is "the calming of all conceptual diffusion" *(prapañcopaśama).*[101]

When conceptual thought is temporarily set free from the immediate pragmatic concerns of everyday activities (as in daydreaming or philosophizing), one concept provides access to another, this other to a third, and so the process continues, on and on without any mechanism to regulate or halt it. For this reason, Buddhist texts compare the mind to a young and playful monkey that climbs a tree by grasping at one branch after another, rising farther and farther from the solid ground of everyday, practical concerns until it sways precariously among the fragile twigs of its imagination, frightened, confused, and certain to be injured in the inevitable fall.[102] In conventional, day-to-day situations, whether a word or concept is valid or invalid is a matter to be determined entirely on the basis of its application, but the tendency of conceptual thought is to depart from strictly context-bound usage and to impute a metaphysical sense to everyday concepts. The word *real,* for example, in its most concrete application, expresses the fundamentally practical concept of "being in accordance with appearance or claim," "genuine," "functional," or "efficacious." In this sense, under normal circumstances when a carriage is said to be real, this means simply that it will perform in accordance with our expectations of what a carriage should do: it will convey *x* amount of cargo from point *a* to point *b.* A second but equally pragmatic sense of *real* lies in its reference to "actual existence," as opposed to "merely possible, apparent, or imaginary existence." In addition to these two meanings—or more specifically, through a very subtle process of extrapolation from them—the word *real* has also assumed an essentially metaphysical import which has nothing whatever to do with its concrete application in any actual or possible state of affairs in the world. This tertiary meaning is the one most likely to emerge when rationalist or idealist philosophers enter into conversation with each other. In this case, when one of them states that a given carriage is real, his colleagues understand by this assertion that the carriage is in possession of an essence or quality of intrinsic being that in some way transcends its function within the context of everyday life. We may naturally be quite curious as to the exact location of this "essence," and about its relationship to the carriage which stands before us, loaded and ready to go, but no matter how or where we may search, no such essence will ever be found. This may or may not bother a philosopher (some are bothered, some not), but it is a matter of consternation for those of us who are less inclined to speculation and more inclined to feel that this sort of language is at best superfluous, as one would certainly be no worse off without it.[103]

The essence of the carriage is not revealed through any examination of the parts, for each of them is itself merely a composite of other parts, and these as well dissolve under closer inspection. Candrakīrti summarizes the Mādhyamika's conclusions: "Even though [the existence of the carriage] must remain unproven . . . in the context of everyday experience, nevertheless for everyday purposes it is designated in dependence on its parts—without analysis.[104] This very [carriage] is a possessor of parts and pieces, it is referred to in the world as an 'agent.' . . . Do not lose touch with the 'screen' taken for granted in the context of everyday experience."[105]

The concept "carriage" is valid when its objective referent is real, and any object is real (actually existent) only insofar as it performs its requisite function. A valid concept naturally expresses its application, just as a real or existent object naturally expresses its function. The nature of an object's existence cannot be meaningfully expressed as an independently valid or entirely objective "fact," for any object is defined as existent only in dependence on its being conceived and designated in an essentially linguistic act. Thus there are genuine carriages and there are artificial carriages—there are even imaginary carriages that may forever exist only in the mind—but there can be no such thing as a metaphysical carriage, because a metaphysical carriage could not perform a function within any actual or possible state of affairs. It is excluded by definition from the sociolinguistic matrix of everyday life and is entirely inefficacious. The concept of a metaphysical carriage carries with it absolutely no application as an intelligible ontological claim.

Let us quickly review what has been said concerning the doctrine of dependent designation along with some of its implications. A word or a concept is necessarily *prescriptive* in that its meaning derives from its application within a particular context. That is, the meaning of a concept derives not from its reference to some independently real object, but rather through the circumstance that it recommends to us a particular way of looking at the world and suggests a certain appropriate form of behavior on this basis. It is in this sense that concepts serve to mold our experience, which is quite apparent when words are used for obviously practical purposes. For example, the concept "carriage" is immediately intelligible in either of two conventional contexts, where "carriage" means either

(1) If one *conceives* of this assemblage of wood and metal in such and such a way, then one can use it to transport cargo; or
(2) If one *assembles* this wood and metal in such and such a way (as dictated by the concept "carriage"), then one can use it to transport cargo.

There are any number of imaginable contexts, however, in which the behavior suggested by the use of a term might at first appear other than strictly practical. This is often the case in theoretical discussions, where abstract concepts of relation or process can be understood as "practical" only in the strictest sense of the word. Under such circumstances the context of usage invariably dictates an attitude or form of behavior which is somehow consonant with the interests and intention of the speaker as a member of the sociolinguistic community in which the communication takes place.[106] Yet the use of certain expressions—as for example, "God" (with a capital *G*), "soul," "subjacent ground," "necessary connection," and so forth[107]—poses a special sort of difficulty in that the expressions seem to entail a quasi-ontological claim in their apparent reference to a transcendent reality analogous to the mundane carriage. Rationalist and idealist philosophers and metaphysicians employ a very similar type of highly specialized technical vocabulary in order to refer exclusively to necessarily private objects, so that even verbs and grammatical abstractions dealing with processes or relations are hypostatized and transformed into entirely metaphysical entities. Despite their normal appearance, such concepts are actually divorced from any conceivable application within the sociolinguistic matrix governed by everyday states of affairs. They embody an ontological claim that can neither be avoided, nor justified, nor interpreted in any intelligible manner. According to the Mādhyamika, propositions incorporating concepts of this sort—the paradigmatic form of rationalist discourse—are associated with a pattern of behavior that is out of touch with the pragmatic ground of everyday experience.

I cannot emphasize too much how important it is to understand that the rationalistic/idealistic way of thinking and speaking is not condemned because it fails to connect with reality; this would imply the possibility of an alternative language that could take up the same project more successfully.[108] The Mādhyamika philosopher is actually in favor of something much more radical. He is suggesting that we altogether give up the search for truth in the project of trying to establish a necessary connection between language and reality, for this way of thinking and speaking is itself the problem to be solved. We can see this very clearly throughout most of the *Vigrahavyāvartanī,* and in *The Entry into the Middle Way,* 6.171–178, where the real topic of discussion is the Mādhyamika's use of language. The opponent is naturally put off by what he sees as the Mādhyamika's refusal to take a position on important epistemological and ontological problems and defend it: "Is there or is there not any connection between your refutation and the propositions it claims to refute? In speaking as you do, you defeat your own position and are incapable of defeating the position of another. Your irrational denial of the very possibility of holding any position is like a double-edged sword."

Candrakīrti responds:

> The problem of connection between argument and counterargument is only a problem for those who presuppose some form of absolute, as you do, and are therefore compelled to meet your claims with appropriate counterclaims. For us it is a pseudoproblem, because we hold no such presuppositions. Our words are like the reflection of a face in a mirror—there is no real connection between the reflected image and the face, but the image nevertheless serves a specific purpose for the person using the mirror. Similarly, our words bear no intrinsic connection with your epistemological and ontological problems and the language used to express these problems, but nevertheless these words of ours can serve to realize a specific purpose: They can be understood to express something that is not at all susceptible to expression in the language of "objective facts."[109]

Elsewhere, Nāgārjuna says the same thing more succinctly: "When all things are empty, perfectly calm, and by nature inviolable, where is there any proposition, or any 'connection' *(prāpti)* with the distinguishing characteristic of [another] proposition, or any fallacy stemming from connection with the distinguishing characteristic of [another] proposition?"[110] The way of thinking and speaking that finds expression in propositions embodying epistemological and ontological claims is diagnosed as symptomatic of an extremely serious "mental affliction" *(kleśa),* the generative force behind an inordinate and ultimately painful clinging to the "I" and to the objects used to insure the continued well-being of this "I." The Mādhyamika maintains, moreover, that philosophers are not the only ones bound up so tightly in the web of reified thinking. In articulating these ideas of "necessary connection" and the like they merely reveal to public scrutiny what is for the average person a clandestine, unconscious, and deeply engrained tendency of conceptual thought, that both generates and sustains an attitude and a pattern of behavior tainted by clinging, antipathy, and delusion. This tendency is rooted in the natural interpretations that are passed from one generation to the next, and it draws from them powerful emotional and volitional associations that can only be broken down through a radical transformation of personal experience, and consequently, of one's entire form of life: "Through insight, the meditator realizes that all afflictions and misfortunes are associated with the philosophical view of a real, substantial 'I,' and once he has identified the [conscious and unconscious concept of an intrinsically existent] self *(ātman)* as the focal point of this view, he uproots [the reified concept of] 'self.' "[111]

3.4.3 Emptiness *(śūnyatā)*

The concept of emptiness is of the highest value and most profound truth precisely because of its soteriological application as the tranquilizing agent for "conceptual diffusion." As the grand master of the Mādhyamika, Nāgārjuna, wrote, "One who is in harmony with emptiness is in harmony with all things."[112]

Emptiness is equated with causation and with the entire range of associations which coalesce around the concept of dependent origination. Candrakīrti discusses this aspect of emptiness in the context of the sixth stage of the bodhisattva's path:

> It is no secret that empty entities like reflections and so forth depend on a collocation [of causes and conditions], and that a cognition may be produced in the form of an image of such an empty reflection, for example.[113] All entities are, in a similar fashion, not only empty [as effects], but they are also produced out of empty [causes]. According to the two truths, [entities possess] no intrinsic being, and therefore they are not permanent, nor are they subject to annihilation.[114]

In this passage emptiness is first presented as a matter of normal, everyday experience. Suppose for a moment that you have mistakenly perceived a reflected image in a mirror, taking it as the "real" (unreflected) object. In this case you have been misled by inattention or bad lighting or for some other such reason. Taking into account the circumstances, one can say that the reflection is illusory, in that *it is not what it appears to be.* Clearly such a statement does not imply that the reflection is totally nonexistent, or that the original object is transcendentally existent. The reflection is said to be illusory only in order to correct the mistaken notions held by those who believe it is real in a way that it is not. As Candrakīrti writes, "In their circumstantial efficacy [words] are subject to the speaker's fundamental concern with communication."[115] This is a relative, not an absolute, assertion, tailored to meet the demands of a particular situation.[116]

Once encouraged to look more closely at the reflection and the circumstances of its appearance, we find that the image originates in a composite of particular causes and conditions, including the mirror, the original object, and the neccessary illumination. At first glance the reflection had appeared to be an independent, substantial object, but on closer examination its existence proves to be entirely contingent on a circumstantial collocation of causes and conditions. Alter any aspect of these circumstances and the reflection is altered, or gone. It is illusory—*not what it appears to be*—because its appearance as a self-sufficient entity masks its deeper nature as the product of a momentary coalescence of causes and conditions.

That the reflection owes its temporary existence to these various causes and conditions need not trouble the viewer who is only interested in using it as a reflection, and when properly appreciated the image in a mirror serves any number of valuable purposes. Although it can be deceptive because it is not exactly what it appears to be, it is nevertheless efficacious, valuable, and not at all problematic for one who recognizes its exclusively pragmatic nature.

In the second part of the passage cited above, Candrakīrti describes emptiness as a considerably more subtle and complex state of affairs. The problem of illusion is now cast in the form of a much more broadly based existential concern. In what way are all the objects that we encounter in the course of everyday life similar to the reflected image discussed above? The Mādhyamika philosopher wants to draw our attention to the curious circumstance that the world we live in would look much different to us if we took the time and energy to investigate the presuppositions that are bound up with its conceptual and perceptual underpinnings. The "I" and the objective, external things of the world appear to us as independent, self-sufficient entities, but upon closer examination this appearance proves to be predicated upon a tacit, preconscious failure to engage with the deeply contextual nature of their presence. As the analysis proceeds, Candrakīrti points out the paradoxical nature of causes and conditions which are themselves only the products of other such causes and conditions. In the case of the reflection, a collocation of real causes and conditions results in an illusory, unreal effect, but the illusory appearance of the world is vastly more profound, for here both cause *and* effect are artificial constructs, devoid of intrinsic, self-contained being.

As long as the things of the world are used for everyday, practical purposes, their illusory nature may and usually does go completely unnoticed, though some unforeseen change can momentarily upset the day-to-day routine of expectations.[117] Indeed, very few look closely enough to notice the illusion, and of those who do, even fewer are affected by their vision into this ever-descending vortex of causes and conditions. Under normal circumstances we manage to function in the midst of this grand illusion with only the most superficial appreciation of the paradox and mystery that confront us at every step.

The Mādhyamika's insistence that the world is *like* an illusion *(māyopama)* is specifically directed at those who believe that it is real in a way it is not. The arguments presented in these texts are a series of corrective devices; there is no attempt to connect words to reality or to suggest that they somehow reach beyond themselves for their justification. This nonreferential use of language allows the Mādhyamika authors to avoid the problems inherent in holding and defending a particular philosophical view, for when their aim is accomplished and the problem of reifying thought disappears, the content and the form of the propositions are entirely inconsequential. Therefore Nāgārjuna can write, "When all things are empty . . . where is there any proposition?"[118] The concept of emptiness is a medicine prescribed for a specific ailment—the disease of clinging—but the prescription will have only a negative effect as long as the Mādhyamika's language is forced into the mold of some privileged view of a transcendent, ahistorical (epistemic) truth or (ontic) reality. As the buddha explained to Kāśyapa,

> It is not [the concept of] emptiness that makes things empty; rather, they are simply empty. It is not [the concept of] the absence of any ultimate cause that makes things lack such a cause, rather, they simply lack an ultimate cause. It is not [the concept of] the absence of an ultimate purpose that makes things lack an ultimate purpose; rather, they simply lack an ultimate purpose. Kāśyapa, I call this careful reflection the Middle Way, truly careful reflection. Kāśyapa, I say that those who refer to emptiness as "the mental image *(upalambha)* of emptiness" are the most lost of the lost. . . . Indeed, Kāśyapa, it would be better to hold a philosophical view of the ultimate reality of the individual person the size of Mount Sumeru, than to be attached to this view of emptiness as "nonbeing." Why is that?—Because,

> Kāśyapa, emptiness is the exhaustion of all philosophical views. I call incurable whomever holds emptiness as a philosophical view. Kāśyapa, it is as if a physician were to give medicine to a sick man, and when the medicine had cured all the original problems it remained in the stomach and was not itself expelled. What do you think, Kāśyapa, would this man be cured of his disease? —No indeed, Blessed One, if the medicine cured all the original problems and yet remained in the stomach, unexpelled, the man's disease would be much worse. The Blessed One said: Thus it is, Kāśyapa, that emptiness is the exhaustion of all philosophical views. I call incurable whoever holds emptiness as a philosophical view.[119]

Within the Mādhyamika system, soteriology plays an integral role as the practical application of philosophical reflection. Although things do not bear their individual existence within themselves, as they appear to do, they are nevertheless quite real insofar as they are efficacious. The eminent Tibetan scholar Tsong kha pa has referred to the concept of causal efficacy—the sole determining criterion for conventional truth and reality—as "the most profound and subtle matter within the Mādhyamika philosophy."[120] One needs, then, to appreciate the interdependent nature of appearances and to adjust attitudes accordingly in order to avoid a considerable amount of suffering.

Indian philosophers traditionally define two distinct types of negation:[121]

(1) Negation which indirectly affirms the existence of something else *(paryudāsa)*
(2) Negation which leaves nothing in its place *(prasajya)*.

The Mādhyamika has assigned a particular significance to each of these. The first type of negation is "relative," "implicative," or "presuppositional" negation. Taken as a philosophical principle, it leads to the opposed ontological positions of nihilism and absolutism. The second type, "nonimplicative" or "nonpresuppositional" negation, is used by the Mādhyamika to express the radical, deconstructive negation effected through application of the concept of emptiness. When one negates the reality of a reflection he necessarily affirms the reality of the reflected entity, but when the Mādhyamika philosopher negates the reality of the world, he affirms neither a "something" nor a "nothing" in its place.[122] In other words, he does not supply the old, reified concept "reality" with a new, more refined and abstract referent, a metaphysical substrate of some novel and convincing variety. On the contrary, in order to know and accept the world as it is both in its everyday appearance and in the paradox and mystery of this appearance, he steps entirely outside the language game that can be played only by holding onto propositions *(pratijñās)* and views *(dṛṣṭis)*. In taking this step he makes the first critical move away from a form of life caught up in the anxious and generally manipulative attitude associated with this way of thinking and acting.

This is a very subtle point, and it lies at the heart of the Mādhyamika philosophy for, as Candrakīrti and others have often indicated, no matter what ingenious things may be written or said about emptiness by the cleverest philosopher, ultimately it must be "seen by nonseeing" and "realized by nonrealization."[123] It is not an epistemic or ontic fact dissociated from everyday life, ensconced "out there" somewhere waiting to be discovered and possessed through the power of critical rationalism. "Emptiness" is a conventional designation *(prajñapti)*, an ordinary word used, like all words, to accomplish a specific purpose registered in the intention of the speaker. In accordance with what the texts say, it is perhaps best understood as a way of being, a way of existing, knowing, and acting with complete freedom from clinging and antipathy. In the direct (noninferential) realization of emptiness, the claims of the part or individual are immediately experienced as harmonious with the claims of the whole world of sentient and insentient being. The direct realization of emptiness, what I call the "actualization" of emptiness,[124] is the source of the bodhisattva's universal compassion.

Soteriology is built into Mādhyamika philosophy, where any concept must bear an inherently correct application. Just as the very idea of a carriage implies that one is somehow engaged with the world, so the concept of emptiness functions as an exhortation to *act* in a certain way, with a certain attitude of nonclinging. This is an aspect of Buddhist thought taken for granted in the writings of classical Mādhyamika philosophers, and one which many Western interpreters may have tacitly branded as mere apologetics. This is certainly unfortunate, for the Mādhyamika is straining at just this point to say something of considerable philosophical import about the nature of understanding. "Emptiness," the central concept of Mādhyamika philosophy, is amenable to interpretation only as the expression of an entire form of life. The task is, then, to interpret it in this manner. To accomplish this we must begin by listening carefully to what the Mādhyamika authors have to say in the total context of their writings. Nothing of significance will come from attempts to understand the texts by basing our analysis on predetermined categories of philosophy, religion, sociology, psychology, and so forth. This could have the effect only of more firmly entrenching us in a preexisting network of unexamined presuppositions about what can legitimately be considered a problem.

3.5 The debate with the Yogācāra

Candrakīrti devotes a considerable amount of space to his debate with a single rival Buddhist school, the Yogācāra, though one need not be conversant with the complexities of Yogācāra scholasticism to appreciate the significance of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy as developed in *The Entry into the Middle Way.* Candrakīrti's objections to the Yogācāra can best be understood as an extension of the Mādhyamika's general objections to the use of language as a vehicle for epistemological and ontological views of "truth" and "reality." Let us see the extent to which this is a valuable way of approaching Candrakīrti's text.

3.5.1 Sources for the study of Yogācāra thought

Yogācāra translates from Sanskrit as "the practice of meditation"; it is most likely the earliest name of this school and the one which most accurately indicates the source of the school's preoccupation with mental and perceptual processes. Other names associated with these writings are Cittamātra (mind alone), Vijñaptimātra (representation alone), and Vijñānavāda (the doctrine of consciousness).

It is not surprising that the Yogācāra plays so great a role in Candrakīrti's work, for judging from the literary output of the school, it must have constituted a very formidable opponent. The Yogācāra was, along with the Mādhyamika, one of the two most influential Mahāyāna schools of thought. Western scholars generally credit the monk-scholar Asaṅga with the earliest expression of Yogācāra doctrines, although it seems that he early on converted his brother, Vasubandhu. Between them they composed most of the fundamental Yogācāra treatises.[125] Two particular sūtras, the *Saṁdhinirmocana (SN)* and the *Laṅkāvatāra (LA),* seem to have had a decisive influence on their work, and it is clear that the impulse for their thought, as well as many specific doctrines, can be traced to earlier strata of the Indian Buddhist tradition. One of the Yogācāra's most distinctive doctrines, embodied in the concept of reflexive awareness *(svasaṁvitti; svasaṁvedanā)* is anticipated in a Sautrantika doctrine that was considerably refined by the logician Diṅnaga;[126] and the *Dhammapada,* an ancient text that was held in great esteem by all later schools, speaks in its first stanza of the primacy of mind: "All things are dominated, governed, and constituted by mind. If a man speaks or acts with a tainted mind, then suffering follows after him, just as the wheel of the wagon follows after the hooves of the bullock. . . . But if he speaks and acts with a pure mind, then ease follows after him, just like his shadow that is always with him."[127]

From the writings of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu on, the school displayed a distinct preference for complex and extremely sophisticated scholastic vocabulary, replete with the sort of hairsplitting logical and epistemological distinctions that Candrakīrti found so objectionable in the work of his other major opponent, Bhāvaviveka. It is most likely because of this affinity between their methodological predispositions that, in the twilight years of Indian Buddhism, the Yogācāra and the Svātantrika joined forces to forge a powerful syncretic tradition that was eventually transported into Tibet.

3.5.2 The Yogācāra doctrine of "the three marks"

Almost any of the Yogācāra's principal texts will help develop an appreciation for their use of language. In what follows I have relied heavily on Vasubandhu's *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa (TSN)* both on account of the relative clarity of the ideas discussed there and because much of Candrakīrti's critique focuses on a terminology that has its locus classicus in this particular text. We can be certain that Candrakīrti himself studied this treatise as a source of Yogācāra thought.[128]

The *Trisvabhāvanirdeśa* consists of thirty-eight stanzas explaining the doctrine of "the three distinguishing characteristics" *(trilakṣaṇas)* or "the three [types of] intrinsic nature" *(trisvabhāvas).* It is primarily a theoretical discussion of the epistemological and ontological basis of the subject/object dichotomy and its resolution in a nondualistic reality called the *dharmadhātu.* As Vasubandhu writes, "A mental image *(upalambha)* of the *dharmadhātu* is brought about by perception of nonduality."[129]

The three types of intrinsic nature are: (1) the imagined *(parikalpita);* (2) the dependent *(paratantra);* and (3) the perfectly accomplished *(pariniṣpanna).* In applying this doctrine to an analysis of everyday experience, the Yogācāra's characteristic emphasis on mind is everywhere apparent.

Any entity displays its imagined nature insofar as it appears as an object to be apprehended *(grāhya)* by an apprehending subject *(grāhika),* and this subject/object dichotomy is the source of the cosmic illusion that results in so much suffering.[130] The imagined nature has to do entirely with conventional everyday experience, and it is to be correctly understood and eliminated by not perceiving the subject/object dichotomy as anything other than pure illusion.[131] The perfectly accomplished nature is the converse of the imagined nature, in that it is absolutely dissociated from conventional everyday experience.[132] It is both the absence of duality and a nondual unity perceived in the mental image of the infinite *dharmadhātu.*[133] And finally, the dependent nature is so-called because of its dependence on causes and conditions.[134] Although it is responsible for the appearance of the subject/object dichotomy, the dependent is itself something other than this dichotomy,[135] for as both the imagination of this unreal dichotomy *(abhūtaparikalpa)*[136] and mind *(citta)*,[137] the dependent actually exists,[138] but not as the dualistic form in which it is perceived.[139]

Vasubandhu illustrates the relationship of these three types of intrinsic nature with an analogy concerning a magician who causes a piece of wood to look like an elephant:[140]

> It is like a magical power which, by the working of incantations, appears in the nature of an elephant: there is altogether no elephant at all, but only its form.
>
> The elephant stands for the imagined nature, its form for the dependent nature, and that which remains when the elephant has been negated stands for the perfectly accomplished nature.
>
> So, in the same way, by the working of the fundamental mind, the imagination of the unreal appears in the nature of duality; there is altogether no duality at all, but only its form.
>
> Fundamental consciousness is like the incantations, suchness is like the piece of wood, the discrimination [of subject/object] is like the form of the elephant, and the duality [of subject/object] is like the elephant.

When the illusion of the subject/object dichotomy completely dissolves, what remains is perceived as the perfectly accomplished nature: "It is just as in the case of magic, where no mental image of the elephant, the disappearance of its form, and the mental image of the piece of wood take place all at once."[141]

3.5.3 The Prāsaṅgika critique

Before moving on to Candrakīrti's critique of the Yogācāra, a word or two needs to be said regarding the Yogācāra doctrines as they appear in *The Entry into the Middle Way*. There is some reason to argue, along with Candrakīrti, that the language of these texts lends itself too easily to reification in terms of an epistemological monism. However, it would be quite unrealistic—and unedifying—to judge the Yogācāra solely on the basis of an account of its doctrines set forth by its most vehement opponent. *The Entry into the Middle Way* is best studied to learn about Candrakīrti's own understanding of the Mādhyamika, not to form an opinion about his opponents' doctrines.

The basis of the Prāsaṅgika's three major objections to the concept of the dependent nature are summarized in 6.47 (the Yogācārin is speaking): " 'Dependent form' *(paratantrarūpa = paratantrasvabhāva)* acts as the foundation of any designated existent entity: (1) It appears even in the absence of any apprehended external object; (2) it actually exists; and (3) its intrinsic nature is not within the range of conceptual diffusion."

In criticizing the Yogācāra Candrakīrti focuses on the concept of dependent nature. His objections revolve around a general contention that the Yogācāra has simply resurrected the Vedāntic concept of a metaphysical substrate of all phenomenal appearance and clothed it in the guise of this dependent nature. Referring to the stanza just cited, one can paraphrase Candrakīrti's critique:

(1) This concept of dependent nature constitutes an absolute denial of the existence of conventional everyday reality.
(2) It amounts to nothing other than the assertion of a transcendental substrate, an intrinsically existent ground.
(3) This substrate is posited as something other than a reified concept (that is, as something other than a product of conceptual diffusion).

It is not difficult to understand how Candrakīrti reached these conclusions, and in fact he is not alone in his reading of the Yogācāra texts. Most modern interpretations of "Yogācāra idealism" are in accord with the absolutist views Candrakīrti attributes to the school.[142] Even Kochumuttom, who has defended the system against prevailing idealist interpretations, himself lapses into the same Kantian vocabulary that Murti used in his exposition of the Mādhyamika:

> Kant's distinction between noumenon and phenomenon seems to be close to the distinction between the absolutely accomplished nature and the imagined nature. For Kant noumenon is the thing-in-itself, unqualified by any category of experience, and, therefore, even beyond the reach of experience; while phenomenon is the thing as it appears to the perceiver, necessarily qualified by the categories of experience superimposed by the perceiver. Similarly, the absolutely accomplished nature is the thing as such, unqualified by the mental forms of subjectivity and objectivity, the only categories of experience recognized by Vasubandhu, and, therefore also beyond the reach of ordinary, saṁsāric, experience; while the imagined nature is the thing as it appears to the ordinary perceiver, necessarily qualified by the categories of subjectivity and objectivity superimposed by the perceiver. Both for Kant as well as Vasubandhu, the mode in which a thing is experienced, depends on the perceiver, who of necessity imposes his subjective forms on the thing-in-itself. A difference between Kant's position and that of Vasubandhu is this: according to the former one never comes to realize the noumenon, the thing-in-itself, while according to the

> latter one definitely comes to realize the absolutely accomplished nature in the state of enlightenment.[143]

Indeed, it is virtually impossible to escape from the grip of the presuppositions underlying the Yogācāra's preoccupation with the epistemological problems of the subject/object dichotomy. Here again we see how the very choice of what is to be legitimately considered as a problem is already made by the language one uses in discussing that problem. What Candrakīrti objects to in the Yogācāra texts is their use of a language that is extremely susceptible to reification. As with Murti's interpretation of the Mādhyamika, it is not that the Yogācāra is wrong per se, but that given his soteriological aim, the Yogācāra philosopher's use of language is unskillful. Clinging is not eradicated by using this sort of language, it is simply furnished with a much more subtle justification. Instead of clinging to the "I" and other objects of everyday experience, one begins to cling to such reified concepts of dependent nature as "the perception of nonduality," or to the *dharmadhātu* that is "entirely dissociated from conventional, mundane experience," or to the "nondual unity that remains behind when the illusion of the subject/object dichotomy is dispelled"—just as the piece of wood remains behind when the illusion of the elephant is removed.

We have seen how Candrakīrti objected to the use of the expression "mental image" with reference to emptiness because of its susceptibility to reification in a philosophical view,[144] and here we find Vasubandhu discussing "the mental image of the nondual *dharmadhātu.*" Similarly, both Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti refused to be trapped into using the word *connection (prāpti),* on the grounds that this is the very language of reified thought.[145] Here Vasubandhu uses the same vocabulary to discuss the perception of the perfectly accomplished nature as a "connection" with this nature.[146] Elsewhere, Asaṅga refers to the "substrate" *(āśraya)* responsible for the entity's appearance as that which remains after the adventitious appearance of form and all other characteristics are negated through the correct apprehension of emptiness.[147] The "entity alone" *(vastumātram)* is to be separated from "designation alone" *(prajñaptimātram)* and equated with this substrate.[148] As Asaṅga writes, "How, then, is emptiness well apprehended? . . . Whatever remains in that place, one knows it as it is, that *here* there is something that truly exists."[149]

In interpreting these words from Asaṅga's *Bodhisattvabhūmi (BB),* Janice Willis comments:

> Here the traditional warning, most often voiced by Mādhyamikas, must be heeded. Voidness [= emptiness] is not itself an entity, and it is a grave mistake to hypostatize it. Hence the Mādhyamikas teach *śūnyatāśūnyatā,*

> the "voidness of voidness." Asaṅga's stance with regard to *śūnyatā* is voiced more positively in order to allay fears of complete nihilism. . . . *Śūnyatā* is therefore treated as an existent by the Yogācāra, but it is important to see that by this characterization, Asaṅga wishes to assert that *śūnyatā* exists as the *ultimate mode* of existence of all things (and not itself as an existent thing).[150]

I am inclined to agree with Willis here, and this is a defense that does not seem to violate the spirit of Asaṅga's position. But at the same time, I am convinced that her interpretation tends to distract our attention from a much more useful point that can be understood only by learning to appreciate the Mādhyamika-Yogācāra controversy from the perspective of the Mādhyamika—that is, not as an epistemological or ontological problem, but as a problem of skillful means *(upāyakauśalya)*. Certainly both Asaṅga and Nāgārjuna agree that *śūnyatā* is nothing more than a conventional designation (a *prajñapti*), and yet for both of them it is also the most effective means to liberation. The critical difference is that for Asaṅga words derive their meaning through reference to "what remains"—to the transcendental basis or substrate *(āśraya)* of the designation; whereas for the Mādhyamika this view of language—a view that is built into the idea of *paratantrasvabhāva*—is unacceptable because it militates against the soteriological purpose of the word *śūnyatā* by providing a rarefied conceptual ground for clinging. Once again, it is important to see that, from the Mādhyamika's perspective, at least, the Yogācāra is not *wrong* because this ground *does not exist.* He is simply *unskillful* because in his use of language he defeats the soteriological aim that is the only real justification for all the pages and pages of mere words. Compare Nāgārjuna's recommendation for the use of the word *śūnya:* "Nothing is to be called empty *(śūnya)* or not empty, nor is anything to be called both empty and not empty, or neither empty nor not empty; [the word emptiness] is, however, used in conversation as a conventional designation."[151] In commenting on this stanza, Candrakīrti takes special care not to use a vocabulary with any epistemic or ontic associations, no matter how rarefied or abstract they might be:

> We do not say any of these things. One is incapable, however, of appreciating the nature of [the bodhisattva's] practice as it is without speaking. Therefore we base ourselves firmly in conventional truth through a process of imputation, and we say "empty," "not empty," and so forth as dictated by convention, according to the particular needs of those who require instruction. . . . "Nothing is to be called 'empty,' because it exists, or 'not empty,' because it does not exist: this is the Middle Way."[152]

It would be counterproductive to argue directly against the Yogācāra by asserting that there is no substrate, and that the things of the world have no existence whatsoever: "According to the Sage, what is seen, heard, and so forth is neither true nor false. From a position (= view) a counterposition arises, but both are meaningless."[153]

Candrakīrti does not meet the Yogācāra with any such counterarguments; rather, he consistently attempts to defuse his opponent's terminology by insisting that scriptural teachings on "mind alone" are not of definitive meaning.[154] They are set forth with the sole intention of diminishing attachment to the objects encountered in everyday experience, and as is the case with any conventional designation, the meaning of the expression "mind alone" cannot be understood without taking into consideration its purpose or application. When grounded in this way, the expression "mind alone" is understood to mean that "the agent within the context of everyday experience is 'mind alone.' "[155] As Candrakīrti explains in *The Entry into the Middle Way,* "Even though form does indeed exist, it does not, like mind, function as 'agent.' Therefore, in denying the existence of any other agent besides mind, there is no implied denial of form."[156] In finding this sort of nondefinitive "intentional meaning" in sūtras teaching that "the world is mind alone," Candrakīrti cautions the Yogācāra not to forget that the reverse is also true: Mind is the world alone. "If form does not exist, then do not hold to the existence of mind; and if mind exists, then do not hold to the nonexistence of form."[157]

My primary aim in this discussion is to demonstrate how the Mādhyamika's critique does not directly engage the epistemological or ontological doctrines of the Yogācāra by offering a counterthesis that would claim to link up with reality successfully. I wish to suggest that the critique can best be appreciated as applying to the Yogācāra's use of language—a use of language which the Mādhyamika considers impractical for soteriological purposes. This is most clearly seen in Nāgārjuna's and Candrakīrti's unqualified refusal to develop any philosophical position of their own on epistemological or ontological questions: "We [Mādhyamikas] do not have the same attitude toward our [concept of] the screen as you [Yogācārins] have toward your [concept of] dependent being. With reference to the nature of everyday experience, we say: 'Even though things do not exist, they exist'—and this is done for a specific purpose."[158]

Candrakīrti comments:

> On your own authority, you maintain within your system that dependent being is realized in the knowledge of the saints; but according to us this is not the case for the [conventional objects referred to as] screened *(saṁvṛta)*. Then what exactly do we say? Even though they do not exist [from the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning], because they are taken for

granted throughout the context of everyday experience they are said to exist, strictly with reference to the nature of worldly convention. This distinction is made as a means of refuting those who assert any form of substance ontology. The Blessed One said as much in these words: "Although the world may quarrel with me, I have no quarrel with the world. That which is considered to exist in the context of the world I also assert as existent; and that which is considered not to exist in the world I also assert as nonexistent."[159]

SECTION FOUR

THE TEN PERFECTIONS OF THE BODHISATTVA PATH

4.1 The perfection of generosity *(dānapāramitā)*

This first stage is characterized by the practice of generosity *(dāna)*, which is the predecessor of all the other perfections and the foundation for any further progress along the path. In its mundane aspect, that is, prior to the actualization of emptiness (see the sixth stage), generosity constitutes the ability to give whatever can be given freely and without resentment, through a feeling of sympathy for those who are in need. The nature of the gift is not considered to be of primary importance. What is critical is that the tendency to grasp at one's own property be countered by developing a spirit of nonclinging.

The philosopher-poet Śāntideva (685–783),[1] who was himself an extremely influential spokesman for the Prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika, wrote about the perfection of generosity in his magnum opus, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra (BCA)*: "In the beginning the Blessed One directs only the giving of vegetables and so forth; yet eventually he fashions a person who would sacrifice even his own flesh."[2]

This sort of giving is only a start, however, for the bodhisattva must remain constantly sensitive to the pain felt by all creatures. He must strive to cultivate an attitude of nonclinging, which is initially accomplished by eradicating the grossest kind of attachment to possessions through not acquiring in the first place anything that could not be willingly surrendered.[3] Through the practice of charity a basic impulse of renunciation is engendered and the first significant step is taken in a direction that will eventually culminate in total liberation from bondage to ideas as well as from bondage to objects. When generosity is practiced in conjunction with the wisdom *(prajñā)* expressed in both intellectual discernment and actualization of the concept of emptiness at emotional and volitional levels, it contributes to an attitude of compassionate nonclinging that is the predominant theme of Mādhyamika philosophy: "When one fares by seizing, by clinging, then [in one's case] the world would be a mass of perversion; but when one fares free from clinging, then [the world itself] is *nirvāṇa.*"[4]

At the sixth stage of the path the bodhisattva learns not only to cease clinging to material things, but also to identify and surrender all partiality for even the subtlest objects of reified notions concerning the intrinsic nature of sentient beings and insentient things. By coordinating the development of wisdom and compassion, even in its causal aspect the practice of giving fosters a frame of mind conducive to a soteriologically effective interpretation of emptiness; and as a supramundane perfection it becomes a pure expression of deep insight into the selflessness of all things: "*Bodhi* (awakening) is not realized by seeing or hearing or understanding, nor is it realized by the [mere] observance of morals; nor is it realized by abandoning hearing and seeing, and it is [definitely] not realized by giving up morals. Thus what one should abandon is disputation as well as [false] notions of 'I' and 'mine': one should not cling to the diverse natures of things."[5]

For the Mādhyamika philosopher the perfection of generosity is equated with this spirit of nonclinging. Generosity here means action in the world coupled with wisdom, and action and thought that are in harmony with the concept of emptiness. In its most developed expression generosity grows out of a direct and unqualified rejection of any reified concept of giver, gift, or recipient. Rooted in compassion as well as in wisdom, generosity is born from a fracture of the ego which renders it especially vulnerable to the suffering of other beings.

Within the Mādhyamika system the doctrine of selflessness *(nairātmya)* is a philosophical concept, an ethical principle, and a soteriological device of the highest order. It is considered the source of wisdom and compassion, and nonclinging is taken as a mark of the most profound insight into selflessness. For all these reasons, perhaps, in the Mahāyāna scriptures it is written that "giving *is* the bodhisattva's awakening."[6]

4.2 The perfection of morality *(śīlapāramitā)*

> One law serves to summarize the whole of the Mahāyāna: The protection of all beings is accomplished through examination of one's own mistakes. —Śāntideva, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*

Close attention to all aspects of his behavior is the central feature of the bodhisattva's career at the second stage of the path. He has already begun to attend to the practice of generosity, and the moral conduct prescribed at this stage is in certain respects merely an extension of this practice and a deepening of his understanding of the concept of selflessness.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* lists three categories of morality: (1) restraint from immoral behavior; (2) cultivation of virtuous behavior; and (3) accomplishing what is most beneficial for all living beings.[7] According to a very old Buddhist tradition, virtue is grounded in restraint of body, mind, and speech. Restraint, or self-discipline in all dealings with the world, is especially concerned with fostering qualities opposed to egotism as it makes manifest its influence through clinging and antipathy, which are two of the so-called roots of all evil *(akuśalamūlas)*. The third root of evil, delusion, is countered with the cultivation of perfect wisdom at the sixth stage of the path. These three spiritually unhealthy mental states are identified as invariable concomitants of the deep-rooted tendency of conceptual thought to construct reified notions of an ultimately real self. They are diagnosed as symptomatic of an attitude inharmonious with the concept of emptiness, and they help to forge the links of a chain which keeps the mind firmly bound to a beginningless cycle of misery.

The scriptures and commentaries enumerate a substantial number of inducements to moral behavior, including fame, popularity, beauty, happiness, and the ability to meet death calmly. Still, the most significant power of morality in its "causal" aspect lies in its potential to free the mind from emotional disturbances connected with anger, regret, guilt, and any other disruptive moods which arise from inconsiderate or selfish action. It is important to understand that virtue in the Mahāyāna sense of the word need not be viewed as an arbitrary and absolutely binding code of ethics, for in essence it is a system of mental discipline designed to induce goodwill and peace of mind in oneself and in others.

At the close of chapter five in his other famous work, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya (ŚS)*, Candrakīrti's successor Śāntideva discusses the most compelling pragmatic justification for virtuous behavior: "A [bodhisattva] cultivates the desire to abandon all sinful and unmeritorious behavior. In this context, [an action] is evil and unmeritorious if it causes the mind to become agitated and so is opposed to balanced concentration. Such [an action] is also referred to as 'an opponent to *samādhi*.' "[8]

Balanced concentration *(samādhi)* is achieved in a mind that has become calm and firmly disciplined through the practice of meditation, so that it is clearly focused. All its attention can then be given over to developing a precise intellectual appreciation of doctrinal issues and eventually to actualization of the concept of emptiness.

From the very start, morality lays the foundation for a stable mind, which is prerequisite to the practice of meditation and to the cultivation of perfect wisdom. Nevertheless, ethical behavior does not always remain simply a tool or a conscious imposition. As a supramundane perfection it is transformed into a spontaneous demonstration of the bodhisattva's soteriologically effective understanding of emptiness and his great compassion for all living beings.

4.3 The perfection of patience (*kṣāntipāramitā*)

The perfection associated with the third stage of the path is bound up with an ambiguous and problematic concept. *Kṣānti,* here translated as "patience," expresses much more than passive acceptance of frustration or pain. Like all the practices cultivated along the path, in its causal aspect patience is recommended as a spiritually healthy, creative response to everyday situations and problems, while as a supramundane perfection, it is regarded as a direct manifestation of compassion and wisdom. In attempting to gain some appreciation of the broad spectrum of meaning conveyed by the Mahāyāna concept of *kṣānti,* according to what the texts tell us, it is necessary to develop a much deeper appreciation of the value and efficacy of patience not only as a common virtue, but also as a characteristically Buddhist form of mental discipline which becomes more and more pronounced during the advanced states of the bodhisattva's career.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* designates three particular varieties of *kṣānti.*[9] The first two are defined primarily in terms of a lack of antipathy, as the patience to forgive those who inflict injury and the patience to bear necessary and unavoidable suffering. In this context, of course, "injury" must be understood as a reference to any sort of mental cruelty, either intentional or unintentional, as well as to physical violence. These first two kinds of patience should be practiced as social virtues, with the understanding that although the concepts of "self" and "other" are entirely suitable and harmless enough for practical purposes, they become pernicious and destructive when used to justify anger and resentment.[10]

Both of these types merge into a third sort of "patience," which is described in the texts as a mental discipline of the most refined order. Patience in this sense is not practiced as a social virtue, but with the specific aim of cultivating one's intellectual appreciation of doctrinal and philosophical issues to the point where soteriological application of the concept of emptiness finally becomes a real possibility. This third kind of patience is defined as a quality of stamina in conjunction with a proper attitude of mental flexibility or sensitivity. Both are considered necessary in order that the bodhisattva conduct a meaningful analysis of the various aspects and ramifications of the doctrine of the four noble truths. It is further subdivided into three categories:[11] (1) patience in studying the principles of doctrine and philosophy; (2) resolution in critically reflecting on and practicing what is learned through study; and (3) "intellectual flexibility," which culminates in a deep, noninferential understanding that all things are, from the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning, entirely unproduced *(anutpattikadharma-kṣānti)*.

The last of these three subdivisions is discussed in some detail by the Yogācāra philosopher Asaṅga, who informs us that it is traditionally regarded as "a most essential factor in the awakening of a bodhisattva."[12] He goes on to provide an annotated list of doctrinal and philosophical issues, each of which represents a particular opportunity for application of the concept of patience.[13] The final item mentioned there is *kṣānti* with regard to the buddha's body of the Dharma.[14]

Much of this is obscure, but it should be clear that *kṣānti* is associated with a great deal more than what is normally expressed in the notion of patience. In the early stages of practice it constitutes simple nonsusceptibility to anger, but as a supramundane perfection the humble quality of patience evolves into an attitude characterized by equanimity and alertness and a heightening of intellectual flexibility, an attitude diametrically opposed to the push-and-pull of dualistic, reified thought. "Patience" is the cornerstone of a way of life based on insight and attention rather than on manipulation and control.

4.4 The perfection of energy *(vīryapāramitā)*

The perfection cultivated at the fourth stage of the path is characterized by enthusiasm and perseverance in every undertaking. *Vīrya* is the source of energy to begin the bodhisattva's career and to see it through to full awakening.

Once again, three aspects are specifically mentioned: (1) energy and stamina which serve as armor in encounters with difficulties and provide the encouragement necessary to avoid depression; (2) energy which produces enthusiasm and good spirits; and (3) energy which helps to accomplish the welfare of all living beings.[15] As a further clarification of the meaning of the term, Śāntideva offers the following verse: "What is *vīrya?*—It is resolution in pursuing whatever is good. And what is referred to as the antithesis of *vīrya?*—Laziness, slothfulness, attachment, depression, and self-contempt."[16]

Lack of self-contempt is equated with confidence *(māna)*, with the caveat that in this case the term carries with it no connotations of vanity or conceit. In this context, "confidence" refers to a strictly measured assurance which guarantees that the bodhisattva does not fall subject to doubt or hesitation in his journey, even though he will certainly find himself alone and in apparent opposition to the concerns of those who do not appreciate the nature of his spiritual aspiration. Again, according to Śāntideva, he must cultivate this confidence in three areas: (1) confidence in the ability to act on his own initiative, which must grow directly from the Buddhist teachings; (2) self-respect as a deterrent to the afflictions of clinging, antipathy, and delusion; and (3) the power of self-assurance which is not worn down or swayed by the opinion of others.[17]

These three types of confidence outlined by Śāntideva in his *Bodhicaryāvatāra* may well have been incorporated into the Tibetan tradition as the three "diamondlike convictions" of the bKa gdams lineage founded by the famous Indian scholar Atīśa. They are: (1) the diamondlike conviction to be unmoved by the weeping, pleas, or demands of friends or relatives who oppose the decision to renounce worldly concerns; (2) the diamondlike conviction firmly to guard one's practice against the degenerative effects of the mental afflictions; and (3) the diamondlike conviction to disregard the opinion of worldly people:[18] "As one is going off to a cave or some other suitable place for Dharma practice, if others are filled with anger and derision, saying, 'You're just a miserable beggar,' and so forth, one should think, 'If they call me a blessed saint—fine. If they call me a rotten scoundrel—fine. It makes no difference to me. So many problems arise from attaching a high value to the opinions of worldly people that it is an obstacle to Dharma practice.' "[19]

These diamondlike convictions are a part of the "ten innermost jewels of the bKa gdams lineage." Besides them there are also four "entrustments" and three "changes in living status," all of which have to do with the cultivation of energy on a grand scale, as they are designed to meet the needs of a solitary ascetic who must live for some time entirely outside the claims of society. The first of the four entrustments involves the total devotion of one's mind and thoughts to pursuit of the path, which means that one must remain constantly aware of the opportunity provided by life as a human being, and of the fact that death may steal the opportunity away at any moment. Second, one must "entrust" the practice of the Buddhist teachings to a life of poverty. And third, even if renunciation of the world entails starvation, one must develop the energy to accept such a destiny: "In any of my countless past lives, have I ever sacrificed my life for the sake of the Dharma? Now, if I must die for the sake of my Dharma practice, so be it. The causes of death of both the rich and the poor are basically the same. The rich die after spending their lives committing non-virtue for the sake of accumulating wealth. On the other hand, there is great meaning in dying after spending a life of bearing hardship in one's Dharma practice. This I can do."[20]

Finally, the solitary meditator must entrust his death to the dark and lonely recesses of a barren cave. The three changes in living status involve expulsion from the ranks of society and acceptance of life under circumstances "no more luxurious than those enjoyed by a stray dog." And for the few who are capable of devoting themselves to study and practice with such enormous commitment, at the end of the path lies the most significant of all changes in living status—the attainment of full awakening and buddhahood in this life.

The extreme perseverance required in realizing the ten jewels of the bKa gdams is obviously beyond the pale of those just beginning their spiritual practice. At the start it is sufficient to conceive of energy as the generation of inner determination and courage which does not read every hardship in life either as an unyielding external force or an incurable internal flaw, but which looks for the source of any problem in the relationship between "self" and "other."

Vīrya is not simply the strengthening of the power of will in service to the Buddhist teachings. It is also the energy needed to remain constantly attentive and to observe all aspects of experience with extreme patience and care. In this sense, through the practice of meditation, *vīrya* helps build a bridge between the intellectual interpretation of philosophical concepts and their soteriological application in everyday life. Initially a bodhisattva's energy is said to be generated from faith or conviction *(śraddhānusārin)*, but as he ascends through the levels of the path it derives more and more from critical understanding and application of the teachings *(dharmānusārin)*.[21]

4.5 The perfection of meditation *(dhyānapāramitā)*

In the *Mahasaccakasutta* the buddha is speaking with a Jain ascetic named Aggivesana. He has been narrating the story of his own extremely ascetic life during the years immediately preceding the attainment of awakening in Bodhgaya, and how these practices had nearly destroyed him physically without resulting in any real insight. Finally, after months of particularly grueling self-mortification,

> This, Aggivesana, occurred to me: "I know that while my father, the Sakyan, was ploughing, I was sitting in the cool shade of the rose-apple tree, aloof from pleasures of the senses, aloof from unskilled states of mind, entering on the first meditation, which is accompanied by initial

> thought and discursive thought, is born from aloofness, and is rapturous and joyful, and while abiding therein, I thought: 'Now could this be the way to awakening?' Then, following on my mindfulness, Aggivesana, there was the consciousness: 'This is itself the Way to awakening.' "[22]

In these words, the buddha described his first spontaneous experience of meditation. The systematic cultivation of more and more refined versions of this same basic experience forms the central theme of the bodhisattva's practice at the fifth level of the path.

Meditation is at the very core of all Buddhist thought, yet it has remained a subject barely acknowledged by scholars in the West until quite recently, and even now the battery of technical terminology in Sanskrit, Pāli, and Tibetan surrounding the topic retains an aura of vague imprecision, generally resisting all attempts at fluid and comprehensible translation. In the beginning it is most important to appreciate the significant role that meditation plays within the whole concept of the "path," and the tremendous influence it has exerted upon all Buddhist thought. Eventually, however, we need to build upon this appreciation so as to arrive at a real understanding of how meditation is directly related to study of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy.

During the previous four levels of the path the bodhisattva has cultivated generosity, morality, patience, and energy, each of which is necessary to lay a strong foundation for the practice of meditation. Like these other perfections, meditation too involves a disciplined commitment, through a specific practice, to ordering and determining to some extent the nature of one's experience in the world. Yet just as the previous four qualities are unified in the practice of meditation, so the importance of dhyāna itself is clear indication of the influence which mind exerts over the essential characteristics and the overall pattern of one's experience in the world: "Tigers, lions, elephants, bears, snakes and all enemies, the demons, demonessses, and all the guardians of hell—every one of these is bound through binding of the mind, and with control of the mind all of them are controlled. The speaker of truth taught that from mind alone all fears proceed and sorrows without measure."[23]

The first four perfections in their causal aspects are designed to guide the bodhisattva to a point where the external circumstances of his life are in harmony with his study of the philosophical concepts embodied in the Buddhist teachings and to reduce the possibility of agitation *(vikṣepa)* engendered through spiritually unwholesome states of mind, which arise from and perpetuate a beginningless cycle of compulsive action and reaction. In connection with the practice of meditation, the bodhisattva must first cultivate mindfulness *(smṛti)* with respect to all his behavior, which implies constant attention to these first four perfections as they are grouped under the generic title of *śīla* (good character). So we are told: "From the growing interaction between good character and balanced concentration *(samādhi),* the action of the mind is purified. A bodhisattva's training is simply this—the purification of the mind, for a purified mind is the principal generative cause of the welfare of all living beings."[24]

The action of the mind is purified through the combined practice of the first four perfections in conjunction with meditation, which is in this context referred to as *śamatha,* or "calming of the mind." The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* provides a definition:

> What exactly is "calming" *(śamatha)?*—It is the way in which the bodhisattva, after resolute pursuit of critical reflection . . . [on philosophical and doctrinal issues], binds his thought to the support of some simple object or thing which is not to be expressed in words. And being released from all specific supports through fixed concentration on this mental image, devoid of all conceptual diffusion and restless mental states, he sets up and firmly plants his innermost thought among the instrumental causes of balanced concentration. This is to be accomplished for quite some time, until [his mind] is sharply focused and stabilized. This is referred to as "calming."[25]

Dhyāna is actually a generic term, and *śamatha* is only the first of two broad divisions of meditation which have played a critical role in the development of Buddhist thought. *Śamatha* itself includes a wide variety of meditation practices which are not the sole property of the Buddhist tradition. Śākyamuni—the buddha of our historical period—is said to have learned about many of these techniques from his early teachers, and throughout the centuries during which Buddhism developed in India, meditative tools continued to be expropriated from a vast repository of yogic teachings and adapted to the specific needs of various Buddhist masters. Within the general category of *śamatha* we find the exercises known as the four *brahmavihāras,* all the trance states of the form and formless realms, and of course, the endless types of samādhi that result in the acquisition of parapsychological powers to be used for the benefit of all.

Purification of the mind (as referred to in the passage quoted above) is not accomplished solely through the practice of *śamatha,* however, for within the Buddhist tradition meditative stabilization of the mind is only a foundation for the practice of *vipaśyanā* 'insight',[26] which developed as a uniquely Buddhist technique closely associated with the cultivation of perfect wisdom at the sixth level of the path. There is no doubt that the history of Buddhist thought is saturated with the influence of

Hindu practices like some of those just mentioned, but within this second broad division of meditative techniques we may find a key to the direct relationship between philosophy and meditation in the Buddhist tradition.

When the mind is calm and focused it can be used as an instrument of tremendous power of insight, allowing the meditator to experience directly the central concepts of Buddhist philosophical systems. Gimello explains the relationship between theory and practice in the following way:

> The degree of stillness recommended varies from technique to technique but, once an adequate stillness is achieved one proceeds to analytically review and thereby immediately to apprehend or "see" the meaning of the fundamental truths of Buddhism. Discernment *(vipaśyanā)* is the latter, the analytic and most characteristically Buddhist part of this discipline. Since no analytic activity, meditative or other, can be carried on without the use of conceptual equipment, since the data of no experience interpret or explain themselves, one must bring to the experience a scheme of organizing and interpreting terms such as in science would be called a theory. Otherwise the experience either remains mute and meaningless or is uncritically interpreted in terms of some other, perhaps deficient, conceptual scheme or theory.[27]

I have commented briefly on the peculiar inseparability of conceptual thought and sensation and noted in passing Feyerabend's discussion of the interdependence between observational languages and the natural interpretations that both generate and are generated by these languages. His work offers us a useful vocabulary for exploring the relationship between philosophy and meditation in the Mādhyamika. "We have discovered," Feyerabend writes, "that *learning* does not go from observation to theory but always involves both elements."

> Experience arises *together* with theoretical assumptions *not* before them, and an experience without theory is just as incomprehensible as is (allegedly) a theory without experience: eliminate part of the theoretical knowledge of a sensing subject and you have a person who is completely disoriented and incapable of carrying out the simplest action. Eliminate further knowledge and his sensory world (his 'observation language') will start disintegrating, colours and other simple sensations will disappear until he is in a stage even more primitive than a small child.[28]

The rigidity of the so-called empirical world evaporates under closer inspection, when we begin to fathom the extent to which sensation and perception are completely bound up with language and conceptual thought:

> To start with, we must become clear about the nature of the total phenomenon: appearance plus statement. There are not two acts—one, noticing a phenomenon; the other, expressing it with the help of the appropriate statement—*but only one*. . . . We may, of course, abstractly subdivide this process into parts, and we may also try to create a situation where statement and phenomenon seem to be psychologically apart and waiting to be related. (This is rather difficult to achieve and is perhaps entirely impossible.) But under normal circumstances such a division does not occur; describing a familiar situation is, for the speaker, an event in which statement and phenomenon are firmly glued together.
>
> This unity is the result of a process of learning that starts in one's childhood. From our very early days we learn to react to situations with the appropriate responses, linguistic or otherwise. The teaching procedures both *shape* the 'appearance', or 'phenomenon', and establish a firm *connection* with words, so that finally the phenomena seem to speak for themselves without outside help or extraneous knowledge. They *are* what the associated statements assert them to be. The language they 'speak' is, of course, influenced by the beliefs of earlier generations which have been held for so long that they no longer appear as separate principles, but enter the terms of everday discourse, and, after the prescribed training, seem to emerge from the things themselves.[29]

The bodhisattva path is a means of exposing and defusing many of these very beliefs "which have been held for so long that they no longer appear as separate principles," and the combination of philosophy and meditation is a particularly powerful feature of this path. Gimello's further remarks concerning the application of Buddhist conceptual categories within the practice of insight meditation are especially relevant in this connection, and well worth considering:

> It is surely not the purpose of any form of Buddhist meditation simply to construct conceptual models of the world. . . . Quite to the contrary, their ultimate aim is to disabuse the meditator of his attachment to any and all concepts. Liberation, after all, is "inconceivable". However, it is the attachment and not the concepts that one must be rid of. That very process of conceptual disenchantment, so felicitously described by Buddhists as a "rinsing" of the mind in "the waters of insight" is in fact a homeopathic therapy. Cure of conceptual illness requires precisely the expedient and disciplined use of well-chosen conceptual remedies. . . . They are to be used, by collected and one-pointed minds, without attachment, and are particularly designed so as not to occasion or incite attachment. . . . The mind is never given the opportunity to make hard and false discriminations, nor is it allowed to dwell in or depend upon any one perspective on any discrete object. These meditative concepts and the rather special sort of analysis they permit are to be sharply distinguished from conventional concepts—from notions like selfhood, permanence,

> cause and effect, and the like—which Buddhists are wont to call *vikalpa* or *saṁjñā*. Conventional concepts are regarded by Mahāyāna Buddhists as the flawed instruments of unstilled minds and they are thought to be too readily susceptible to dangerous misuse. First of all, they imply false discriminations and are therefore held simply to be in error. But, even more serious is the assumed likelihood of their becoming mental fixations, objects of a kind of intellectual craving that is far more difficult to extinguish than emotional craving. Such concepts as are used in meditative discernment, are not at all the deceptively safe harbors or lulling abodes of thought which Buddhists, in their "homeless" wisdom, must avoid. . . . *Their validity is a function especially of the sort of use to which they can be put.* They are not used, as conventional *vikalpa* or *saṁjñā* are, in such spiritually inexpedient activities as differentiation or dichotomous discrimination. They produce instead, as we have seen, visions of coalescence and mutual permeability. They are so defined as to actually "disarm" themselves, as they are being used, of the snares of craving and delusion with which conventional concepts are equipped. . . . They therefore do not tether the mind to ignorant views but propel it further along its liberating course.[30]

It perhaps appears as no startling discovery that the primary concepts of the Mādhyamika system are to be used in meditation, but the real force of my point here—and Gimello's as well, I suspect—goes beyond this fundamental observation. Although this book is certainly not intended as a presentation of the technicalities of meditative practice, the principal concerns of part 1 are directly related to the issues discussed in the passage just cited. Two things need to be carefully noted and explained in greater detail: (1) from the perspective of the Mādhyamika, the meaning and the validity of *all* concepts are determined solely as functions of "the use to which they can be put"; and (2) emptiness and the other key Mādhyamika concepts are not only "especially well suited" for application in the context of meditative practice, but *require,* in order to be properly understood, an appreciation of the philosophical significance of the practice of meditation and the other perfections of the bodhisattva path.

Prajñā, or wisdom, is subject to a threefold division:[31] (1) wisdom founded on textual study; (2) wisdom based on philosophical reflection and reason; and (3) wisdom that grows out of a synthesis of interpretation and application, a synthesis which finds its catalyst in the peculiarly Buddhist type of meditation called *vipaśyanā,* here translated "insight." The first two types of wisdom are most commonly referred to as *śrūtamayī-prajñā,* wisdom composed of rote learning and study, and *cintāmayī-prajñā,* wisdom composed of critical reflection on what has already been learned through study of the textual tradition, so that the material is intellectually assimilated. Neither of these has any direct connection with meditation. Just as meditation can be practiced without recourse to a religious or philosophical matrix (though not without any conceptual structure whatsoever), so the scriptures and the various systems of Buddhist philosophy can be studied without the aid of meditation, though this leads in all likelihood to a distortion of their message through reification of concepts that are necessarily linked to a particular praxis. The third type of wisdom, a nontheoretical or pragmatic understanding of the teachings, is called *bhāvanāmayī-prajñā,* or "the wisdom composed of meditative cultivation." *Bhāvanāmayī-prajñā* is the result of applying what has been theoretically understood to an analysis of all aspects of everyday experience—both subjective and objective—by harnessing the power of concentration developed in the practice of *śamatha.* As we read in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi:*

> What exactly is "insight" *(vipaśyanā)?*—Insight is grounded in fixed concentration infused with a calm presence of mind *(śamatha),* and it comprises analysis, inspection, or close attention to the instrumental causes of those [philosophical and doctrinal] principles which have been properly reflected upon, critical understanding of the teachings (the Dharma), and a great number of other such [forms of discrimination] up to and including absolute mastery of the practice of what has been understood in this way *(prajñācāra).*[32]

Vipaśyanā is truly Buddhist meditation, for it is the essence of *bhāvanāmayī-prajñā;* and this "wisdom composed of meditative cultivation" is itself the perfection of wisdom within the Mahāyāna tradition as a whole. At the sixth level of the path intellectual understanding is firmly grounded not in any transcendental "truth" or "reality" but in the application or actualization of both philosophical and religious teachings, so that the adept is enabled to perceive directly all experience as an instantiation of self-deconstructing Buddhist conceptual categories. This, and nothing else, is the perfection of wisdom.[33]

In the broadest sense, meditation is a method of shaking oneself free from habitual patterns of thought and of refining both the will and the intellect through a maturing of insight into the nature of cognitive and perceptual processes as they influence everyday experience. The ultimate goal of such practice is not to eliminate emotional involvement or to divorce oneself from the external world, but to create a stable and attentive mind which can serve as a workable foundation for appreciating the significance of any experience in the wider context of the Buddhist teachings. Sensitivity in all relationships is to be enhanced, not devalued, and for this it is absolutely necessary to undermine egotism and the clinging to concepts and views of any kind.

The meditator extracts himself from the confines of day-to-day self-centered behavior and gradually attains to a release from the dictates of reified conceptual thinking. Awareness of thoughts and sensations is temporarily set apart from any normal mundane considerations, in the sense that the contents of perception are no longer seized upon as a fulfillment (or a denial) of the ego's own precalculated motives, but rather as dramatic instantiations of one or another key philosophical or doctrinal principle. Through the practice of meditation, all experience begins to assume a new significance, which does not in the least preclude the sort of personal involvement characterized by intellectual and emotional concern, but allows for the transfiguration of both forms of attention into an expression of unselfconscious participation in the world. The flow of events comes to be seen as a dynamic and constantly changing interaction between the six organs of sensation (including the mind) and their respective objective referents—an interaction which is experienced as entirely devoid of any stable, abiding ground. Apprehended in this way, the everyday procession of worldly affairs generates and sustains not only dichotomizing thought and emotion, but a deeper understanding of the philosophical literature as well. The conventional world remains just as it is, but with the steady refinement of philosophical understanding and the direct application of these concepts, one sees the meaning of emptiness unfold as a new dimension within the old order of things—a new natural interpretation that "seems to emerge from the things themselves."

Eventually the meditator establishes himself in a great inner peace characterized in the texts as the actualization of emptiness, devoid of reified thought and therefore free from the distortions of an emotionally unbalanced, egocentric mind.[34] This tremendous inner peace is described as the power embodied in realization of the "suchness" of everyday experience, the ability to see oneself and all the other things of the world with "perfect clarity," just as they are in the context of their relations with each other.[35] The highest experience of perfect, balanced concentration *(samyaksamādhi)* involves the transformation and harmonization of the entire personality so that one's attitude and form of life are in complete accord with the understanding gained through study and critical reflection.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of meditation as the primary instrument for the integration of soteriologically efficacious concepts into the emotional and volitional life of the practicing Buddhist. Understanding becomes no longer a matter of interpretation or belief, but one of direct perception and unhesitating action. It is not simply that questions of epistemic truth and ontic reality are entirely irrelevant to this process; they are, in fact, symptomatic of the archetypal saṁsāric form of life that is permeated with fear and suffering. The inability to escape one's obsession with the observational language in which these questions are embedded—not only to "stop philosophizing," as Wittgenstein puts it, but simultaneously to *see* and *see through* the natural interpretations that give meaning and structure to this and any picture of the world—is to be held tightly, with "a knot made by space," to the wheel of becoming *(bhavacakra),* continually turning round and round under the force of clinging, antipathy, and delusion.

4.6 The perfection of wisdom *(prajñāpāramitā)*

The previous five stages of the path have dealt with the practices of generosity, morality, patience, energy, and meditation. The first four work to foster a structure or harmony within physical and verbal actions, so that external affairs are brought into order, and feelings of anxiety and depression are reduced to a minimum. These virtues are initially cultivated as an effective means to discipline the mind and so to lead it toward a sustained condition of relative calm and stability, and to heighten one's capacity for sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others.

An early scholastic treatise informs us that virtue "is either coordinating, meaning non-inconsistency of bodily action, etc., due to virtuousness; or it is upholding, meaning a state of basis owing to its serving as the foundation for profitable states [of mind]."[36] Just as there are many colors, yet all are characterized by "visibility," so there are many virtues, each of which provides a basis for *order* or *composition.*[37] Under these circumstances meditation first becomes possible as the practice of mental purification *(cittaviśuddhi)*—a natural extension of the previous four virtues, leading to a "profitable unification of mind."[38] The mind is said to be briefly purified during any moral action, and immediately prior to entering a period of meditation there occurs a further stabilization and unification of mental processes called "proximity purification." Complete purification of the mind, according to this tradition, occurs only in deep meditation, which should be practiced in conjunction with the study of philosophy and the cultivation of perfect wisdom.[39]

4.6.1 The concept of "perfect wisdom"

The study of philosophy and the practice of meditation act together to enhance intellectual discernment and moral sensibilities, but it is only after a person has already formed the basis for a wholesome state of mind that he can actually begin to appreciate the significance of either philosophy or meditation in the Buddhist tradition. A "wholesome state of mind" is founded on calmness and insight, and is characterized primarily by an attitude of nonclinging, for the reduction of strong attachment to things and ideas reduces in its turn feelings of hostility, fear, and greed. It gradually contributes to an emotional and intellectual involvement with the world marked by the selfless concern needed to actualize the concept of emptiness.

Wisdom is not simply learning or philosophy, although as the expression is used by Candrakīrti it includes both of these. In the earliest systematic attempts to synthesize the scriptural teachings, philosophy consisted of little more than a highly technical and specialized modification of doctrinal formulas. It was designed to provide a conceptual grid that could be laid over the meditator's experience, separating and defining the basic components of that experience. Ultimately this sort of analysis was justified as a sophisticated expedient for the elimination of a priori presuppositions about the nature of the sentient "self" which result in clinging and antipathy. Early Buddhist philosophy, as represented in the Abhidharma literature, is not particularly concerned with the construction of a flawless system of formal truths. It is not opposed to logic and rational argumentaion, but these two are clearly subordinated in the interests of a higher, soteriological purpose: "The Buddhist teachings and the monastic discipline are all of a single flavor—the flavor of liberation."[40] Philosophy is not viewed as an abstract set of propositions. It is a pragmatic force contributing to insight into the nature of conceptual thought and perception and to an understanding that strong attachment to the reified notion of a self lies at the root of all forms of suffering. This attitude toward philosophy is characteristic of all later developments, including the Mādhyamika, whose deconstructive analysis obviously constitutes an endeavor to exploit logic and rational argumentation as aids to salvation, without any belief in their intrinsic value.

It is assumed that a practical examination of everyday experience will not only reveal certain fundamental inconsistencies in one's preconceptions about the world, but will at the same time lead to a basic dissatisfaction with all attempts to account for everyday experience in a priori terms. The average person operates within a maze of unexamined belief, inherited in the observational language and natural interpretations passed along from one generation to the next as the ground of all experience. Under the influence of this network of hereditary beliefs that are built into thought and language and perception, the average person is almost entirely governed by self-centered considerations, and he is alternately attracted to or repelled by a world that threatens his fragmented, isolated self. Buddhist wisdom stands in direct opposition to this pattern of behavior and to the attitude underlying it, for one develops wisdom by not taking for granted this self-centered view of the world and by deconstructing the grid of prejudices and presuppositions that give shape to all our experience.

Mental processes, or faculties of the mind, are divided by early Ābhidharmika scholastics into three distinct categories identified as (1) perception *(saṁjñā);* (2) conceptualization or ideation *(vijñāna);* and (3) discernment or wisdom *(prajñā).*[41] Perception accounts for our awareness of one object as distinct from another in terms of sensible qualities like color and shape, while conceptualization apprehends the intrinsic characteristics of the object—those not accessible to the five senses. In this literature, prajñā is distinguished from these two as a particular innate faculty of the mind which reveals the nature of everyday experience as it is, divorced from any preconceived notions about its reality or value. This faculty is illustrated by the following.[42]

Imagine for a moment that some unscrupulous fellow is trying to pass a counterfeit bill to an unsuspecting victim. Let us further suppose that there is a third individual involved, a child of three or four, who chances to observe the whole event. Now we must ask ourselves what each of those present *knows* about the counterfeit note. The child clearly perceives the existence of the bill. He can see its shape and color, he can touch it (or even smell it, if given the opportunity), but he is totally unaware of the fact that it is money, and he is entirely incapable of interpreting the numbers printed on it, even though he can easily see them. The unsuspecting victim is only slightly better off. He knows how to count and how to read numbers, so that his knowledge of the bill encompasses the child's perception and augments it with the ability to interpret abstract numerical symbols. It is immediately evident, however, that his knowledge is incomplete in one very crucial respect, for unlike the criminal, he is unable to judge the way in which the bill is both genuine *and* false—both "real" *and* "illusory." His acquired conceptual knowledge, in this instance, represents only a marginal gain over the child's untutored perception. The counterfeiter has a distinct advantage over them, for he knows all that needs to be known in order to behave most effectively in this situation. He knows that the note is present—that it exists, and is real to this extent at least. He can understand and interpret its characteristic marks—the numbers printed on each side. And he knows that it is in one very important respect false or illusory, not because it does not exist at all, but simply because it is not what it appears to be to the naive. The bill is not entirely unreal, but understanding how it is deceptive is an advantage to the criminal because it allows him to adjust his attitude and expectations. He sees the note with perfect clarity, as it is; his knowledge is complete in every respect, and his attitude toward the bill is in accord with its relative value.

The untutored perception of the child is superficial, and the efficacy of rational thought and conceptualization limited. They generate an analytic comprehension of the object which can be of great pragmatic value but is still incomplete. Furthermore, where perception and conceptualization are exclusively relied upon without any awareness of their limitations, one is very likely to develop an unrealistic set of expectations which inevitably leads to frustration and despair. Therefore the texts conclude that it is absolutely necessary that this third faculty of the mind, prajñā, be cultivated and pressed into service wherever possible, in order that we not be deceived by our past conditioning.

The Hīnayāna literature, and particularly the Abhidharma, is most concerned with the illusion of a sentient "self," and they would unravel my example as follows. Our concept of a "self" is founded upon two sorts of information: (1) perceptual data, for example, the physical body in all its material aspects; and (2) conceptual data, which include inferences of abstract characteristics like "consciousness," personality traits, and prenatal dispositions, in addition to the conceptual component of perception. According to the Hīnayāna Abhidharma systems, if we rely entirely on perceptual and conceptual evidence for information about the self we are in danger of committing a serious blunder, for we would be inclined to attempt to purchase lasting satisfaction by grasping at the currency of this "self" as though it were a substantial, enduring entity, when closer inspection reveals that the self is nothing more than a composite of perceptual and conceptual elements—a counterfeit of the reified self that (ironically enough) exists only in the imagination.

The critical distinction between the reified concept of "self" and the conventional notion of "agent" has been described by a modern Buddhist teacher in the following words:

> When someone praises or abuses you, you catch a glimpse of what is to be refuted, but it lasts only momentarily—when you try to examine it, it disappears into the five [psychophysical aggregates]. When you are happy, suffering or angry, you have the best opportunity to recognise this false self. Also, if someone unjustly accuses you of stealing, you experience a cold, uncomfortable feeling in the chest and your whole mind strongly reacts with self-grasping. Then as soon as part of the mind tries to examine this, it disappears like a rainbow. . . . Self grasping is sometimes identified with the body and at other times with the mind. For example, when walking along a cliff, it is identified with the body, and, when viewing one's non-virtue and fearing birth in a low realm, with the mind. The urge for self-preservation which strongly arises while walking along a cliff is not self-grasping, but is accompanied by it. Even the Buddha has the

> instinct of self-preservation, for it is this which preserves the well-being of the relative (= conventional) self. The feeling that the self exists independent of mental imputation is based upon an illusion, and it is because of this, the root of *saṁsāra,* that all [the afflictions] arise. For countless aeons sentient beings have remained in *saṁsāra* due to confusing the relative self with this illusion.[43]

But why do we cling so tightly to an illusion? For protection from impermanence *(anityatā),* decay, and death. Ernest Becker has carefully exposed the source of this illusory "I" and the elaborate mechanism that sustains it:

> The prison of one's character is painstakingly built to deny one thing and one thing alone: one's creatureliness. The creatureliness is the terror. Once admit that you are a defecating creature and you invite the primeval ocean of creature anxiety to flood over you. But it is more than creature anxiety, it is also man's anxiety, the anxiety that results from the human paradox that man is an animal who is conscious of his animal limitation. Anxiety is the result of the perception of the truth of one's condition. What does it mean to be a *self-conscious animal?* The idea is ludicrous, if it is not monstrous. It means to know that one is food for worms. This is the terror: to have emerged from nothing, to have a name, consciousness of self, deep inner feelings, an excruciating inner yearning for life and self-expression—and with all this yet to die. It seems a hoax, which is why one type of cultural man rebels openly against the idea of God. What kind of deity would create such complex and fancy worm food? Cynical deities, said the Greeks, who use man's torments for their own amusement.[44]

The empirical truth of impermanence is never completely suppressed by the fictions that we create or inherit. Here is the source of *duḥkha*—the pervasive anxiety that is held at bay only through the strength of forgetting or refusing to look more closely.

For most Hīnayāna schools, release from fear and suffering can be achieved only by learning to see completely through this illusory appearance of a self, and beyond even death, to the underlying collocation of perceptual and conceptual data responsible for the illusion. This is defined as "wisdom" in the literature of these schools. The Mādhyamika set out to purge this definition of any trace of objectivity.

Nāgārjuna's critique of this position appears more sophisticated philosophically and is thus more compelling to a modern Western mind, but it is also important because it is embedded in a radically different soteriology. I have discussed the threefold nature of prajñā as being composed of study, critical reflection, and meditative cultivation of what has been learned. Given this definition of prajñā—a definition common to all Buddhist schools, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna—it is clear that "wisdom" is a direct expression of the meditator's total mastery of philosophical and doctrinal teachings. The nature of wisdom varies from school to school because of differences in the concepts that the schools teach. In another sense wisdom is more than concept and reason, when it is referred to as "wisdom as an effect," but for the moment it is most important to understand how the Mādhyamika's radically deconstructive approach to philosophizing resulted in a complete reshaping of the conceptual content of prajñā. The thorough going critique of Hīnayāna epistemology, ontology, and soteriology defined the new conceptual foundation for study and critical reflection, and thereby for meditation as well.

The Mādhyamika would go one step further and interpret the counterfeit bill not simply as a reference to the sentient self, but as a simile for any conceivable subjective or objective phenomenon. It must constantly be borne in mind that such examples are intended only as similes, for the world is never actually identified as an illusion per se; it is merely compared to an illusion *(māyopamam lokam).* Everyday experience is like an illusion in that our interaction with the things of the world is confused and fragmented and our knowledge incomplete. Individual, discrete "things" most certainly do present themselves in the context of everyday affairs as the contents of perception and conceptualization, but when analyzed in perfect wisdom no object retains its appearance of independent reality, nor does any word or concept prove to have a fixed, referential meaning. Ontological and epistemological problems dissolve in the radically contextual nature of life. "Things" are merely contingent and highly unstable fabrications, totally dependent for their existence on particular temporary collocations of causes and conditions. Words and concepts draw their meaning from their application in the interaction between speaker and listener. Perfect wisdom graphically reveals the holistic, contextual nature of all forms of existence and knowledge and allows the bodhisattva to adjust his attitude so that it accords with the "suchness" of all experience, with the self, and with the world, as they are in the context of the moment. In this way, he is invested with the ability to act effectively and in harmony with the demands of every situation as it presents itself in the web of interrelated events.

To summarize a critical distinction: It is not that the "I" or the "external world" is unreal in any absolute sense; the point is only that the average person's experience is adversely conditioned by a wide range of prejudices and presuppositions that are at best soteriologically neutral, and at worst the indirect causes of tremendous fear and suffering. In applying study and critical reflection through practicing the perfections, and especially in the practice of meditation, the bodhisattva comes to see all experience as the instantiation of the Mahāyāna concept of emptiness. In so doing, he realizes all that there is to realize in the wisdom of the Mādhyamika adept.

4.6.2 The relationship of perfect wisdom to the other perfections

The great poet laureate of the Mādhyamika, Śāntideva, included the following verse at the beginning of chapter 9 of his *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* which deals with perfection of wisdom: "The Sage taught the entire retinue of [other perfections] for the purpose of [developing] perfect wisdom; therefore, perfect wisdom should be cultivated by one who desires the cessation of suffering."[45] In the initial stages, the bodhisattva cultivates morality and the other perfections in order to purify his thought and action so that he can eventually correctly interpret and actualize the concept of emptiness. It is crucial from the start that the qualities which constitute these first four perfections not be understood as an externally imposed ethical code. At the sixth stage of the path the bodhisattva clearly comprehends the threefold emptiness of all virtues.[46] Earlier the virtues served as the means to an end, but from this moment on, as illuminated by perfect wisdom, they are gradually transformed into an end in themselves, a spontaneous expression of the bodhisattva's deep compassion for all living beings.

The nature of prajñā as "nondualistic knowledge" *(advayajñāna)* is the key to its relationship with the other perfections. According to the Mahāyāna literature, all five perfections must be practiced for eons, during which time they are purified by perfect wisdom and so purged of all associations with the reified concepts "agent," "action," or "recipient." Accompanied by full comprehension of the emptiness of all things, the practice of these virtues releases one from the obscuring force of mental and emotional afflictions and reified thought. Actualization of emptiness releases us from the grip of the observational language and natural interpretations that are useful in their own right but spiritually dangerous unless placed in contrast with an alternative, soteriological truth. Through their transformation all six perfections are held responsible for engendering the realization of the buddha's body of the Dharma, which is the truth of the highest meaning.[47] Only at this point are they properly called "perfections," and prajñā is chief among them.[48] In union with perfect wisdom each of the other qualities takes part in fostering a deep inner peace, the affective counterpart to direct awareness of conventional truth as it is in its relational, contextual nature.

Prajñā is not amassed through accretion of theoretical formulas or through reference to any sublime, metaphysical, or mystical reality. It is the essential clarity and flexibility of the mind revealed when, through the discipline of the path, the bodhisattva has completely rid himself of the tendency to cling to the contents of conceptualization and perception as though some or all of them were grounded in an a priori truth or reality. Prajñā is a matter both of intellectual understanding and of action. With it the bodhisattva not only slashes away at the thick undergrowth of reified concepts but is also conducted along the path to a point where the concept of emptiness is actualized through his attitude and behavior in the world.

In his remarks on the verse I have cited from the *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* Śantideva's commentator, Prajñākaramati, subdivides prajñā into two main types:[49] (1) intellectual discernment, or what might be called "dualistic wisdom," employed by the bodhisattva in traveling along the path as a cause for actualizing emptiness—hence its name, "wisdom as a cause" *(hetubhūta-prajñā);* and (2) "wisdom as an effect" *(phalabhūta-prajñā),* the noninferential actualization of what has been conceptually grasped, which is devoid of intrinsic being, empty, subsuming all forms, and yet unrelated to any particular thing or idea, no matter how philosophical or refined it may be. *Hetubhūta-prajñā* is developed through study, critical reflection and analysis, and meditation and appropriate activity in the world. This final critical step lets theoretical understanding be incorporated into an attitude that permeates the character of the bodhisattva's experience and gives him access to the path. When his inferential understanding of the philosophical system has been perfected by practice of the virtues associated with the previous stages, and when clinging, antipathy, and the other afflictions have dissolved, then his mastery of philosophical concepts is said to be transmuted into the very heart of awakening—nondualistic knowledge, free from the snare of reified thought. "Nondualistic knowledge" and "wisdom as an effect" are synonymous expressions for the noninferential actualization of philosophical understanding, and this, according to Prajñākaramati, is the reason why prajñā is prescribed as the remedy for one's own pain and for the fear and suffering experienced by all.

Pain is associated with birth, disease, old age, and death, with separation from that which is loved or union with that which is hated, or with loss of that which was obtained only after long pursuit. According to Prajñākaramati, when perfect wisdom is identified as an effect, it is equated with the eradication of all clinging to the "I" and to the objects it depends upon as guarantors of its existence and meaning. Wisdom is then called true peace, nirvāṇa. In perfect wisdom comes the realization of unqualified tranquility, of an alternative, liberating truth—that neither the "I" nor any sentient being or insentient thing ever arises or passes away. Inordinate attachment, strong aversion, and the other afflictions are produced in one who is confused and has, under the influence of reified thought, resorted to seizing at notions of "I" and "mine," so that his mind is constantly distracted and unbalanced. From this deluded grasping come volitional action *(karma),* birth, disease, old age, death, sorrow, grief, misery, despair, and all the other afflictions—the entire mass of fear and suffering. But when, through prajñā, the bodhisattva actualizes the concept of dependent origination and experiences all things as interrelated threads woven into the fabric of emptiness (which is no fabric), then the phenomena of the world are seen to be devoid of any enduring "self" or "sovereign." Like magical illusions, beams of light, fairy cities, dreams, or reflected images, from the perspective of this soteriological truth they are all without intrinsic being. As seen through the eye of perfect wisdom, the relations between things exert much greater claims to meaning and existence than do the things themselves.

When the bodhisattva clearly perceives himself and all things in this way, as they are in the "suchness" *(tathatā)* of the context of their relationships, then spiritual ignorance as the decisive factor in the experience of becoming is terminated. Prenatal dispositions to volitional action and thought *(saṁskāras)* are dispelled, and all the other links in the chain of cyclic existence are subsequently broken. Birth is no more, and so goes all the suffering that derives from it. Spiritual ignorance, desire, and clinging, which form the basis of the other afflictions, are uprooted. Dispositions to perpetual becoming and embodiment, which lead to volitional action, are cut off. And suffering, which is composed of the remaining links in the chain of rebirth, is then totally undermined. These three—the afflictions *(kleśas),* volitional action *(karma),* and suffering *(duḥkha)*—are utterly annihilated through the efficacy of wisdom. One perceives that the concepts "I" and "mine" are of indisputable conventional value but no transcendental significance. As components of worldly experience all elements of conceptualization and perception come into being through an unstable conjunction of the requisite circumstances, and cease to be through disjunction of these same circumstances: Their intrinsic nature is like a bundle of hollow reeds.

This is the traditional account of wisdom as cause and as effect, as philosophical understanding, and as the implementation of understanding toward actualization of a new form of life. By means of perfect wisdom the bodhisattva experiences himself and all things as composite and only contextually real, similar to the images of a dream or magical illusion. Actualization of emptiness dissolves the afflictions of delusion, clinging, and antipathy into insight, nonclinging, and compassion.

Therefore, Prajñākaramati adds in closing, perfect wisdom is the principal agent in the cessation of suffering for all living beings.

4.6.3 Candrakīrti's presentation of the Sixth Stage

At the very beginning of chapter 6 of *The Entry into the Middle Way,* 6.1–7, Candrakīrti briefly defines the role of prajñā in relation to the other perfections and praises the virtues found in a person who sincerely desires to devote himself to the search for wisdom and compassion.

In order to begin truly to appreciate the teachings on emptiness, one must already have experienced a profound concern for the suffering of all sentient beings, and an equally acute sensitivity to the inadequacy of every attempt to ignore or explain away the unsatisfactoriness of the life that can include such misery. All the clever words of theologians, philosophers, and politicians fail to bring relief, and the theoretical and technical accomplishments of the physical sciences seem to lead only to ever-greater alienation from what is felt to be most important in life. One is completely, irrevocably trapped, and the need for a radical solution is plainly evident. Only a desperate person is prepared to make any sacrifice to extricate himself from a form of life which is perceived as oppressively artificial and fragmented. The problem of suffering has subsumed all other problems, and knowledge that could release all creatures from fear and suffering is the only knowledge worth striving for. A real and intimate sensitivity to the fundamental unsatisfactoriness of the present form of life is the touchstone for proper study of philosophy in the Buddhist sense. This is something that cannot be argued or forced upon anyone who has not already experienced it, but once it has been experienced, only a personal, spiritual solution can ever reach deeply enough to touch its emotional and volitional source.

As always, Candrakīrti's remarks here, at the beginning of chapter 6, must be seen as falling within the larger context of the Mahāyāna literature. Understanding the soteriological efficacy of the concept of emptiness is more than a matter of grasping an ostensive definition. Emptiness must resonate far down into the core of every experience, and in order for it to do so, the concept must find direct application as the solution to a universal human problem. It must be shown capable of uniting self-interest with the best interests of all living beings. The problem of suffering is brought forward as the paradigmatic existential predicament, and extended contemplation on pain, its cause, and its cure is recommended at the start of the path. The four noble truths, an analysis of suffering and its alleviation, are traditionally ascribed to the first sermon delivered by the buddha after his awakening at Bodhgaya.[50]

According to all schools of Buddhism, the presence of fear and suffering is so basic and all-pervasive that if one ceases even for a moment to ignore or depreciate its significance, the normal state of worldly affairs —"business as usual" (including the business of academic philosophy) —is experienced as inherently unsatisfactory. Something is terribly wrong with our entire form of life, from the Buddhist point of view, and in the presence of acute fear and suffering one is most urgently aware of this flaw, which permeates even the most apparently benign experiences. A major Hīnayāna scholastic treatise, the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasabandhu, provides a metaphorical illustration of the severity of the problem: "No man even feels a thread lying in the palm of his hand, but if this same thread should get caught in his eye it would produce great discomfort and pain. Like the palm of the hand, a spiritually ignorant person is completely insensitive to the thread of suffering that runs through all things in life; for the wise person, however, as for the eye, this same thread is a source of terrible affliction."[51]

Becker has graphically described the more obvious manifestations of this thread of suffering:

> What are we to make of a creation in which the routine activity is for organisms to be tearing others apart with teeth of all types—biting, grinding flesh, plant stalks, bones between molars, pushing the pulp down the gullet with delight, incorporating its essence into one's own organization, and then excreting with foul stench and gasses the residue. Everyone reaching out to incorporate others who are edible to him. The mosquitoes bloating themselves on blood, the maggots, the killer-bees attacking with a fury and a demonism, sharks continuing to tear and swallow while their own innards are being torn out—not to mention the daily dismemberment and slaughter in "natural" accidents of all types: an earthquake buries alive seventy thousand bodies in Peru, automobiles make a pyramid heap of over fifty thousand a year in the U.S. alone, a tidal wave washes over a quarter of a million in the Indian Ocean. Creation is a nightmare spectacular taking place on a planet that has been soaked for hundreds of millions of years in the blood of all its creatures. The soberest conclusion that we could make about what has actually been taking place on the planet for about three billion years is that it is being turned into a vast pit of fertilizer.[52]

At least in part, to be wise means to have come face to face with the suffering that is bound up with every aspect of our lives. This can never be accomplished by ignoring the problem or by explaining it away. One has to become much *more* sensitive, not less. Buddhist teachings often thought of as unnecessarily pessimistic are actually designed gradually to heighten our sensitivity until it reaches a crescendo of desperation that will not be diminished by anything short of a complete redefinition of one's form of life.

The first noble truth is a statement of fact: "All life is suffering." Whether or not the average person agrees is another matter. The second noble truth is an analysis of the origin of suffering, which is twofold: cognitive, and affective, or volitional. The cognitive origin of suffering is identified as spiritual ignorance *(avidyā)*, the failure to go beyond appearances to an alternative, soteriological truth. The volitional origin of suffering is thirst *(tṛṣṇā)*, also called "attachment," "grasping," "clinging," or "insatiable desire." Both avidyā and *tṛṣṇā* are related as causal factors, and the solution to the problem, provided in the third noble truth concerning the cessation of all suffering, is also twofold. From the cognitive standpoint, suffering ceases with the termination of spiritual ignorance, with realization of and willing participation in the impermanent, insubstantial, contextual nature of all things. Affectively, suffering ends along with clinging and attachment. The fourth noble truth is "the truth of the path which leads to the cessation of suffering." More than anything else, the "path" *is* Buddhism—as a system of ethics, philosophy, and soteriology, but most of all, as a form of life that expresses in every manifestation the possibility of freedom from fear and suffering.

A word must be said at this point about the complex relationship between "path" and "goal." Throughout Buddhist literature frequent explicit proscriptions against all speculation regarding the nature of the goal are juxtaposed with considerable discussion bearing on nirvāṇa and awakening, or "enlightenment." Certainly there is some tension here, though on the whole one finds that the focus is continually brought back to the pragmatic concerns of study, critical reflection, and practice. In the end it is not entirely obvious just what is meant by "the cessation of all suffering," and the Mādhyamika texts themselves generally avoid theroretical descriptions of the third noble truth. Indeed, the concept of a goal is ultimately deconstructed along with any notion of a resolution to the analysis. This points to the important fact that even this most central concern of Buddhist doctrine must be seen as a tool of propaganda—one of the devices of skillful means. I shall deal with this issue in greater detail in section 5.

Following the short prologue, in 6.8ab Candrakīrti presents the formula of the tetralemma *(catuṣkoṭi)*, which also appears at the beginning of Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakaśāstra*. The tetralemma is the trademark of the Prāsaṅgika's distinctive style of reductio ad absurdum. The four alternatives set forth in this aphorism are intended to represent the only possible means of analyzing the nature of production and cause-effect relations with the kind of precision that philosophers and logicians traditionally demand. By exposing the inherent contradictions within each, the Prāsaṅgika aims to refute all rationalistic or idealistic analyses of causality.

After presenting the tetralemma Candrakīrti takes up the alternatives one by one and examines the implications of each position. It is important to understand that in every case the Prāsaṅgika is endeavoring to deconstruct the extreme views *(antagrahadṛṣṭis)* characteristic of a language game which cannot escape from its obsession with epistemological and ontological questions. To do so he must extract from every thesis the full range of its implications. These are not relative assertions grounded in the pragmatic, contextual applications of everyday affairs, but views developed by logicians, epistemologists, and metaphysicians as the expressions of a priori truths. In the language game played by these people—a game based on clinging—*different* means "totally, irreconcilably opposed," while *same* means "absolutely identical." These are the two poles between which reified conceptual thought must oscillate, bifurcating the "suchness" of the moment into one extreme or another in an unending quest for justification of its own inherent limitations. Here the mistake of taking our present observational language and its associated natural interpretations as the exclusive arbiters of truth is dramatically exposed. If the world actually functioned in strict accordance with any of these extreme views, then, as the Prāsaṅgika demonstrates, there would be no world at all, only total chaos or absolute nothingness.[53] The Middle Way winds between these extremes and is revealed through criticism of them. It is a fundamental principle of the Mādhyamika that only through the doctrine of dependent origination is it possible to present a viable account of the holistic, contextual nature of everyday experience. During discussion of the second alternative in the tetralemma this is made explicit: The Prāsaṅgika states in 6.36 that one should not expect conventional appearances to be amenable to logical analysis. Nor should the sort of rationalistic precision which logicians and epistemologists demand be accepted as anything other than a normative ideal, an ideal that is not only of entirely relative value, but one that can at times result in a positive distortion of everyday experience.[54]

In 6.22–36 Candrakīrti presents the system of the two truths. It is important to note that the opponent in 6.22 is now quite prepared to admit that rationalistic discourse cannot do justice to the depth and breadth of everyday experience. Up to this point, in pursuing a rationalistic analysis of the various ramifications of commonsense notions of production and cause/effect, the Prāsaṅgika has been demonstrating the illusory nature of both perception and conceptualization, and indirectly revealing (through reductio ad absurdum) the soteriological truth that is immediately available to anyone who learns to see through this illusion. In the following verses he begins to show how the higher, soteriological truth is in one sense simply another way of interpreting the truths of everyday affairs (including such basic concepts as production and causality). These two forms of truth are not mutually exclusive (6.27), but a greater value is placed on the "highest" truth because of its soteriological efficacy, which can be realized only through a steadfast refusal to step outside everyday experience by an appeal to some a priori authority (6.31). Application of deconstructive analysis to conventional experience neither creates nor destroys anything. It merely reveals the contextual, "dependently originated" nature of this experience.

In 6.37–44 Candrakīrti gives a brief outline of the essential interdependence of all conventional things, equated with their intrinsic emptiness. After having dismantled every available rationalistic explanation of causality, Candrakīrti goes on to show how it is possible to replace these reified concepts, using an alternative approach to language and conceptual thought that does not lead to either absolutism or nihilism. Cause and effect are merely pragmatic terms expressing one aspect of the contextual richness of everyday experience. One need not assume that the things of the world are individually existent in order to account for their interrelationships. In fact, the reality of this network of cause and effect can be appreciated only by seeing it as an integral feature of our present form of life—that is, as a natural interpretation that cannot be stripped away from experience and justified or explained through recourse to any supposedly objective, neutral vocabulary—a vocabulary which would have to be entirely disconnected from the intellectual, emotional, and volitional interests that are necessarily associated with any search for meaning or structure. The endeavor to discover and use such a vocabulary is misguided from the start, not only because language is inextricably bound up in the total context of life, but also because such a project is soteriologically disastrous: it leads deeper and deeper into the convoluted recesses of conceptual diffusion. A person does not find liberation by completely throwing off all the natural interpretations that define his form of life. But by developing an appreciation of both their legitimate power and their inherent limitations he is gradually released from his painful obsession with the narrow picture of life that they present.

Most of the criticism made during discussion of the second alternative in the tetralemma (production from another = cause and effect as intrinsically different) is directed against the Yogācāra, particularly against their concept of a "repository consciousness" *(ālayavijñāna)* and the associated doctrine of the three types of intrinsic nature. The Mādhyamika attempts to defuse these terms by calling them into question on pragmatic and soteriological grounds. Each one of the Prāsaṅgika's criticisms is explicitly directed against a particular Yogācāra claim which can be fully appreciated only by going back to the texts where these doctrines appear.

The two remaining alternatives are dealt with in 6.98–103, and in 6.104–116 the Prāsaṅgika responds to criticism leveled against the concept of emptiness. He answers particularly the contention that, if phenomena do not exist from a soteriological perspective, then they cannot exist at all, demonstrating as before that for him the truth of the matter is quite the reverse: All epistemological and ontological language is divorced from the contextual nature of everyday experience and is completely incapable of providing anything close to a comprehensive, philosophically viable account of even the most mundane aspects of conventional reality.

Insentient things have at this point been investigated and revealed to be devoid of any intrinsic being, a conclusion technically referred to as the "selflessness of things" *(dharmanairātmya).* In 6.117–165, the discussion turns to an analysis of the nature of living beings. Refutation of the concept of an intrinsically existent "I" proceeds along lines comparable to those used in the examination of insentient things, and issues in recognition of the "selflessness of the person" *(pudgalanairātmya).* The concept of an ultimately real self imagined to describe the nature of objective entities and living beings is defined by the Prāsaṅgika as spiritual ignorance *(avidyā),* the basic error of reified thought, which, as the invariable concomitant of clinging, lies at the root of all forms of fear and suffering. The reified concept of a self associated with the person is considered under two categories, according to the particular form in which it manifests its presence.

First, as the metaphysical concept of an eternal, solitary, and independent soul, creator God, or inexpressible, transcendent substrate postulated and defended within the context of a wide variety of epistemological and ontological arguments, the self is considered coarse and relatively easy to refute through rational discourse. Second, as the innately occurring intellectual, emotional, and volitional tendencies associated with the reified concept of an intrinsically existent "I," the self is much more intractable. Grounded as they are in a powerful complex of natural interpretations, these tendencies are extremely difficult even to expose, much less to defuse or extinguish. Natural interpretations are not the conscious fabrications of professional philosophers and theologians, and any spiritually unhealthy tendencies that grow out of them represent a systemic pathology grounded in the structure of language and conceptual thought, a pathology which demands remedy through nothing less than a radical transformation of one's form of life. One achieves such a transformation primarily by resorting to techniques that combine the formal study of philosophy with the practice of meditation and the other perfections.

Although Candrakīrti is not always careful to distinguish between these two categories in the course of his discussion, he deals with both of them at various intervals. He conducts his examination with reference to seven alternatives, which are intended to comprise every possible epistemological and ontological account of the sentient self. The seven alternatives are first presented as they would apply to the analysis of a carriage, so that later we simply substitute the self for the carriage and the psychophysical aggregates of the individual for its parts. At the close of this presentation, Candrakīrti briefly refutes the reified concepts of production and causality, in a final clarification of the doctrine of dependent origination.

The Prāsaṅgika defends his style of reductio ad absurdum argumentation in 6.171–178. His strict refusal to resort to any specific view or proposition is in total harmony with the Mādhyamika's soteriological concept of emptiness. Not only must the ontological status of any *thing* be discussed only in terms of its association with some thing(s) other than itself, but the epistemological problem of *meaning* can as well be defined only by viewing any proposition in the full context determined by its usage. Both existence and meaning (or knowledge) are grounded in a contextual matrix which is essentially a function of certain relations, and yet that a word or concept has nothing but this sort of contingent significance does not, for the Prāsaṅgika, detract from its usefulness—quite the contrary. He holds no fixed position and lays claim to no objective, value-free vocabulary. Because of this it is impossible to engage with him on any such terms. The emptiness of his arguments is the guarantee of their success. As Nāgārjuna's immediate disciple, Āryadeva, wrote: "If one makes no claim to existence, nonexistence, or both, it will never be possible to defeat him."[55]

Although the Prāsaṅgika has no fixed position, it does not follow that he argues arbitrarily and without any purpose, as his opponents have accused. Every statement is tailored to suit the demands of a particular situation, as a response to some specific view or idea or proposition. His use of language is entirely consonant with the soteriological purpose of the Mādhyamika's philosophy. In his comments on 6.172, Candrakīrti explains the critical distinction between "no position at all" and "no fixed position":

> For example: A position may set out to refute the singularity, plurality, length, circularity, or blackness—whatever the qualities that might be ascribed to the hair apprehended by a person with ophthalmia, but such a position is of no possible consequence to those not infected with ophthalmia. Likewise, the refutation developed by you who apprehend both [cause and effect as intrinsically existent] is of no possible consequence to one who analyzes cause and effect as being without any intrinsic being.

> . . . You have strayed from the direct path free from [reified concepts of] intrinsic being, and wandered down the wrong path of strict rationalism. And as you apply yourself to the labors of your own imagination, the obstructions to the correct path mount ever higher. What do you derive from this constant accumulation of words?[56]

At the end of the sixth stage (179–222) Candrakīrti records sixteen specific illustrations of emptiness. A summary of this type should be regarded as a pedagogical device. Similar lists appear throughout the literature of the Mahāyāna, but the number and content of the examples varies considerably from text to text.[57]

4.7 The perfection of skillful means *(upāyakauśalyapāramitā)*

The perfections of this and the three following stages of the path are traditionally assigned a subordinate role, as auxiliaries of perfect wisdom, and as such they are not always enumerated separately. All of them may well have been tacked on to an original nucleus of six perfections as scholastic accretions to a much older doctrine.[58] Of the four, skillful means, which is particularly associated with the seventh stage, is a predominant feature of the bodhisattva's practice.

At the sixth stage of the path, the bodhisattva attains a clarity of vision which allows him direct insight into the contextual nature of the world. His perceptions of insentient things, living beings, and the events in which they participate are not clouded over by reified concepts or associated emotional and volitional disorders, and for this reason he is said to be capable of acting spontaneously and in perfect accord with the demands of every situation.[59] Skillful means is especially connected with propagation of the Buddhist teachings (the Dharma), and it entails complete fulfillment of the practical elements of the path.

Traditionally there are three groups of items distinguished in conjunction with the perfection of skillful means. First are the four "elements of attraction" *(saṁgrahavastus)*. These aspects of the bodhisattva's character act to insure that his dealings in the world will be effective. First is generosity, which in this instance refers specifically to the giving of the gift of the Dharma (considered the best of gifts because it provides a means for the eradication of all desires). Second is pleasing speech *(prīyavāda)*, which helps guarantee that others will be drawn to the bodhisattva's words and find meaning in them. The third element of attraction is purposeful behavior *(arthacaryā)*, meaning that the bodhisattva does not waste time or energy in fruitless activity, but always applies himself completely to the task at hand. This should not be taken as an Asian version of the Protestant work ethic, however, since *artha-caryā* does not refer to compulsive work for work's sake—much less to work for the sake of "progress" in the Western sense of the word. Buddhist texts often emphasize the point that in every circumstance there is some lesson to be learned and some teaching to be applied. In following the path one gradually comes to appreciate things in this light, and so to infuse even the most mundane activity with purpose and meaning derived from study and practice of the Dharma.[60] Finally, the bodhisattva behaves in accordance with an ideal of impartiality *(samānārthatā):* "Thus he must cultivate the thought that whatever affection arises in him with respect to his own son or even to himself, this same feeling must be held for all sentient beings. He is to consider it carefully in this way: 'He comes from one place, and I from another. All sentient beings are my sons, and I am the son of all beings. Yet in this life none is really a son or a stranger to anyone else.' "[61]

The second set of characteristics that is part of skillful means is the four types of "analytical knowledge" *(pratisaṁvid).*[62] These embody the bodhisattva's practical grasp of the teachings and his confidence in communicating what he knows. Last of the categories of skillful means is knowledge of the ritual formulas chanted as aids to meditating and to collecting and focusing the powers of the mind.

In its most general sense, *upāyakauśalya* simply refers to the bodhisattva's ability to act efficiently and effectually. Skillful means is closely related to compassion and is, in this connection, often called "meritorious action," or just "merit" *(puṇya).* In the Mahāyāna skillful means assumed all the status and import of perfect wisdom.

4.8 The perfection of the vow *(praṇidhānapāramitā)*

> In resolution truly, O Blessed One, is the root of the buddha's qualities. He who has no resolution, from him all the buddha's qualities are far away. Yet when he has made his resolve, Blessed One, even if there are no buddhas present, the voice of the Dharma comes forth from space and from the flowering trees. When a bodhisattva has pure resolve in his vow, then all teaching and instruction pour forth from the wellsprings of his own mind.—Śāntideva, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*

With his ascent to the eighth stage of the path the bodhisattva has actualized his philosophical understanding, and the world appears to him not as a random collection of discrete, isolated entities and events surrounding a similarly isolated, alientated "I" but as a multilayered web of relations in the midst of which he acts with complete freedom from clinging. The most refined concepts of patience discussed in my comments on the third stage are fully realized at this level of the path. The bodhisattva now knows from experience that his perceptions are deeply conditioned by preconscious prejudices and presuppositions, and that conventional appearances can be dangerously misleading. At this juncture in his practice he would seem most susceptible to the temptation to withdraw completely from the net of relationships (were such an act possible) and to enter into unconditional peace and liberation from suffering for himself alone. Yet just when he might otherwise be prepared to turn away from the everyday, pain-filled world, there appears to him a vision of all the buddhas who have traveled along this same path, and relying on their example he is inspired to reaffirm his original vow to rescue all sentient beings from the suffering caused by spiritual ignorance and clinging.[63] Rather than retreat into the final, most subtle, seductive illusion of personal liberation, here at the eighth stage of the path the bodhisattva is able to relinquish all self-interest and to surrender himself completely to this world. The consequences and implications of such an act—as well as the necessity for taking it—are more apparent to him than ever before, and the texts describe his willingness to abide in saṁsāra in very dramatic terms.

The decision to maintain his original commitment is rooted in both compassion *and* wisdom, a point made in the literature of the Mahāyāna again and again. The great Tibetan yogi Milarepa was once asked by his disciples "if they could engage in worldly duties, in a small way, for the benefit of others." Milarepa replied:

> If there be not the least self-interest attached to such duties, it is permissible. But such detachment is indeed rare; and works performed for the good of others seldom succeed, if not wholly freed from self-interest. Even without seeking to benefit others, it is with difficulty that works done even in one's own interest are successful. It is as if a man helplessly drowning were to try to save another man in the same predicament. One should not be overanxious and hasty in setting out to serve others before one has oneself realized the truth in its fullness; to do so would be like the blind leading the blind. As long as the sky endures, so long will there be no end of sentient beings for one to serve; and to everyone comes the opportunity for such service. Till the opportunity come, I exhort each of you to have but the one resolve, namely to attain Buddhahood for the good of all living beings.[64]

The bodhisattva's original vow, made at the beginning of the path, was inspired by his recognition of the terrible suffering of the world. From the point of view of the higher, soteriological truth, however, this commitment to beings who do not exist is the paramount absurdity. But Buddhist compassion cannot be appreciated without a clear understanding of the relationship between soteriological and conventional truths. The wisdom of a bodhisattva is cultivated both through philosophical reflection and in the silence of meditation, where the world responds to this supplication for higher knowledge by revealing its intrinsic emptiness, the deepest secret of the spirit inherent in the very fabric of everyday life. His quest for knowledge culminates in a direct experience of the philosophical concepts that he has understood through study and reflection. At the same time, compassion takes root in the bodhisattva's original vow, and it too matures, along with wisdom, into a total affirmation of the identity of emptiness and form, culminating in his selfless concern for all those still caught up in the necessary illusion of worldly existence.

Only at this advanced stage in his study and practice, with actualization of emptiness and a deep noninferential appreciation of the concept of dependent origination as the bridge linking the necessity of conventional truth with insight into its illusory nature, has the bodhisattva achieved the wisdom and the reserves of strength effectively to commit himself to what might once have seemed a preposterous paradox: an ideal of sympathy for countless empty beings trapped in an empty cycle of fear and misery. On the very brink of clinging to the last and most compelling illusion of his own salvation, he pauses for a moment and looks down over the spectacle of the world: "These beings are tied in the bonds of incredible suffering, despair, misfortune, attachment and repulsion, love and hate. They are imprisoned in the triple world of past, present, and future, guarded by grief and remorse, chained by desire, clothed in abysmal ignorance, delusion, and deceit. By us they must be led to true understanding of the triple world, to the sanctuary of courage, the cessation of all pain, the freedom of nirvāṇa."[65]

This immense concern for the anguish of other creatures is presented as the natural expression of perfect harmony between heart and mind. Compassion is in profound accord with the knowledge gained through philosophical analysis, but it is not in the least analytical. On the contrary, this boundless love becomes manifest as the active, operational aspect of "wisdom as an effect," which finds its embodiment in an impulse finally to bring together in nirvāṇa all sentient beings, who have been from the beginning united not only by their spiritual ignorance and suffering in the world but also by their innermost nature, which is empty of any transcendental ground for perception, conceptualization, or clinging. The bodhisattva's vow is a vow of refined, purified love, immersed in paradox and contradiction and nurtured in a wisdom that does not ignore but incorporates and transcends the claims of reason.

4.9 The perfection of the powers *(balapāramitā)*

The bodhisattva's practice at this stage consists primarily in consolidating the powers that are described as an important fruit of spiritual maturity. Lists provided in various places throughout the texts are fairly standard[66] and appear to be designed to emphasize the role that these powers play in the realization of the bodhisattva's commitment to act in the world on behalf of all sentient beings. The four types of analytical knowledge are brought to perfection here, so that the bodhisattva not only understands the doctrine and conceptual content of the Buddhist teachings, but he is, in addition, capable of conveying his understanding and insight to others in innumerable ways.[67]

Perhaps the most significant aspect of these last four stages, for the purposes of our present discussion, is their focus on the bodhisattva's commitment to action. Although earlier he expended enormous effort in cultivating an inferentially based understanding of the central concepts of the Mahāyāna, this understanding did not lead him to renounce the world and retire into the peace of nirvāṇa, much less into the sterility of a purely rationalistic or idealistic abstraction. The last four stages of the path point to the practical application of philosophy, albeit in what is, for modern Western tastes, a rather zealous and over dramatic manner. The bodhisattva is to live and teach in the world with dignity and grace. His actions are efficient, he can waste no effort in confusion or hesitation. And with his ascent to the ninth level of the path, the whole of everyday experience is said to reflect the strength of his vow to propagate the teachings and lead all sentient beings to liberation from suffering.[68]

4.10 The perfection of knowledge *(jñānapāramitā)*

The culmination of the bodhisattva's intellectual and spiritual journey comes with his ascent to the tenth and final stage of the path, immediately preceding his transformation into a fully awakened buddha. The most significant event at this level, and the paramount symbol of the bodhisattva's highest accomplishment, is entrance into a meditative state of balanced concentration immersed in nondualistic knowledge of emptiness. This event is represented by his initiation into the omniscience of a perfect buddha, which is the quintessential perfection.[69]

Prajñā, associated in particular with the sixth stage, is the strength of intellectual discrimination elevated to the status of a liberating power, a precision tool capable of slicing through obstructions that take the form of afflictions and attachments to deeply engrained hereditary patterns of thought and action. Prajñā has an analytic quality which does not seem to figure as a specific characteristic of the nondualistic knowledge developed by the bodhisattva at this final stage of the path. On the basis of what the texts say, however, it is difficult to draw any definite distinction between prajñā and nondualistic knowledge. It is evident that nondualistic knowledge is inseparable from the bodhisattva's experience in all its aspects. It *is* this experience, in both its conceptual and perceptual aspects. Jñāna is the essential clarity and unerring sensibility of a mind that no longer clings to reified concepts of any kind. It is direct and sustained awareness of the truth, for a bodhisattva, that meaning and existence are found only in the interface between the components of an unstable and constantly shifting web of relationships, which is everyday life.[70]

SECTION FIVE

THE EMPTINESS OF EMPTINESS: PHILOSOPHY AS PROPAGANDA

> The practitioner of deconstruction works within the terms of the system but in order to breach it. . . . This double procedure of systematically employing the concepts or premises one is undermining puts the critic in a position not of skeptical detachment but of unwarrantable involvement, asserting the indispensability of [e.g.] causation while denying it any rigorous justification. This is an aspect of deconstruction which many find difficult to understand and accept.
>
> —Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction*

> The truth of the highest meaning is taught only by relying on conventional practice.
>
> —*Madhyamakaśāstra*

5.1 The four noble truths

According to the early Buddhist doctrine of the four noble truths, what is the nature of our present life, and how might it be transmuted into something entirely different? Filtered through a veil of inherited natural interpretations, reified thought, and attachments, one's relationships in the world become a source of frustration and sorrow, for every aspect of experience is ephemeral and devoid of stable identity or essence. This is the first noble truth of Buddhism, the bedrock on which stands the entire superstructure of Buddhist theory and practice.

In the form of physical pain and disease, suffering is an immediate and undeniable factor in the experience of all living beings. There is, however, as defined in the writings of later scholastics, a second, more subtle, but equally all-pervasive form of pain concealed within ostensibly pleasant experiences. Like a stomachache produced from overindulgence in rich food, this kind of suffering arises from a transformation of pleasure into pain. And because the process is often not obvious, for the majority of people life consists to a great extent of self-centered, compulsive actions, committed blindly and without awareness of the painful consequences that must eventually follow. This is always the case where clinging is present, for what may at first appear as pleasure never fails, under these circumstances, to ripen into misery. A little reflection is frequently sufficient to reveal the mechanism at work in this second kind of suffering. But there is yet a third form of suffering which is present at an even more refined level, where it operates, according to Buddhist teachers, in a manner wholly incomprehensible to the coarse and undisciplined sensibilities of the average person. Wisdom as it is cultivated through study and practice of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy implies an acute sensitivity to this third aspect of suffering, which infuses the experience of deluded, self-centered creatures in such a way as to dominate their conceptual and perceptual processes and, indeed, their entire form of life.[1]

When there is desire to possess some object or an instinct to seek for lasting satisfaction through anything whatsoever—whether it is actually present to the senses or merely conceived to exist in some rarefied and abstract manner (as, for example, a "subjacent ground" or a transcendental "I")—one's efforts must always end in frustration and defeat. The attempt to hold onto any object or idea as though it could provide an enduring refuge will only result in more pain, and the insatiable desire to look for security in one or another cherished possession is the source of all misery. This is the second noble truth taught by the buddha, and if one accepts it in all its ramifications, then it is apparent that freedom from fear and anguish can never be defined simply as matters of self-interest. Two of the most basic traits of a bodhisattva are renunciation and humility, both of which have to do with the surrender of all clinging to reified concepts of "I" and "mine." The Mādhyamika analysis is designed to reveal the holistic, contextual nature of all experience.

The third noble truth is the truth of the cessation of suffering, which is to be lived out through actualizing the concept of emptiness. If this beginningless cycle of misery is ever to be transformed, then it is necessary to escape from any form of life where words are felt to derive their meaning through reference to one or another object, even if that object transcends normal experience. The very questions which, under the spell of reified thought, seem so engaging are invariably founded upon a tacit, deep-rooted presupposition that truth and reality can be discussed only in the language of epistemological and ontological propositions, that they must in some manner be susceptible to interpretation through the application of a rationalistic or idealistic grid over the data of everyday experience. The Mādhyamika's deconstructive analysis tries to illuminate and dissolve this presupposition by turning epistemological and ontological language back on itself so that it devours itself whole, without leaving a trace. Any attempt to stand outside this life and this world, in an appeal to some higher authority by virtue of which one may pronounce final judgments over conventional affairs—either "negating" them en masse, or else grounding them in a transcendental reality—is destined for continual frustration because it proceeds from a fundamental contradiction. The natural interpretations and observational languages that shape everyday experience also mold rational thought and critical discussion in a crucible of prejudice, presupposition, and unconscious interest which is always bound up with the search for knowledge. The habitual tendency of dichotomizing thought to reify even the most abstract concepts of relation and process is only encouraged and fortified by this fetish for rationalistic precision. Under the banner of scientific, value-free "objectivity" the preoccupation with rationalistic and idealistic language is easily (and quite unintentionally) inflated into a full-blown metaphysical view. On the other hand, rational thinking cannot be abandoned. The real task is completely to surrender the compulsion to define any and every problem in the propositional structure and vocabulary of rationalism. First, however, this compulsion must be brought to light and recognized for what it is. To do so demands more than extended critical discussion for, as Feyerabend writes, "Prejudices are found by contrast, not by analysis."

> Now—how can we possibly examine something we are using all the time? How can we analyze the terms in which we habitually express our most simple and straightforward observations, and reveal their presuppositions? How can we discover the kind of world we presuppose when proceeding as we do?
>
> The answer is clear: we cannot discover it from the *inside.* We need an *external* standard of criticism, we need a set of alternative assumptions or, as these assumptions will be quite general, constituting, as it were, an entire alternative world, *we need a dream-world in order to discover the features of the real world we think we inhabit* (and which may actually be just another dream-world). The first step in our criticism of familiar concepts and procedures, the first step in our criticism of 'facts', must therefore be an attempt to break the circle.[2]

"I have no proposition," writes Nāgārjuna, "and therefore I have no fallacy."[3] Must we insist on "making sense" of these words by reading them as a veiled reference to some novel claim that needs only to be rephrased in comprehensible epistemic or ontic terminology? Is this the only way we can find meaning in the Mādhyamika's rejection of all views? Or is the compulsion to do so rather a failure on our part to meet the challenge offered in these texts and to *free ourselves entirely* from the grip of our present way of thinking and perceiving? There is an alternative: "We must invent a new conceptual system that suspends, or clashes with the most carefully established observational results, confounds the most plausible theoretical principles, and introduces perceptions that cannot form part of the existing perceptual world."[4]

Note that a truly new conceptual system is incommensurable with the old, it "clashes with" or "suspends" the old system, but does not contradict it: "A set of ideas or actions 'clashes' with a conceptual system if it is either inconsistent with it, or makes the system appear absurd."[5] Consider once again, in this light, what Candrakīrti is saying about the incommensurability of the two truths: "If everyday experience were authoritative, then common people would perceive reality. What necessity would there be for those others, the saints? And what would be accomplished by following their path? It is unreasonable for such foolishness to be accepted as entirely authoritative. Everyday experience is not authoritative in every respect, and therefore it does not contradict the reality [expressed in the soteriological truth of the highest meaning]."[6]

According to the Mādhyamika, our obsession with the rationalistic structure of epistemological and ontological propositions is symptomatic of a pathology that infects our entire form of life. The disease is particularly difficult to treat, for it is rooted in deep, subconscious strata of natural interpretations from which it derives powerful emotional and volitional associations that in turn set up tremendous resistance to its even being seen as a problem. Critical discussion of epistemological and ontological problems will never provide any escape from the closed circle of this way of thinking and speaking.[7] Moreover, although certain concepts may be of great practical value, no concept, regardless of how pure or refined it may appear, is immune to the possibility of infection from the power of inherited beliefs. An incommensurable form of truth and reality can be known only through contrast, and ultimately through direct experience, by first learning to identify and then totally to relinquish all obsession with our present observational language and the concepts and perceptions associated with it. This is the step that has already been taken by Nāgārjuna. He is speaking to us from "the other shore" of perfect wisdom: "If any object were apprehended by perception or any other means of knowledge, then it would have to be affirmed or denied; but since this is not the case I am susceptible to no critical argument."[8]

This does not mean that either conceptualization or perception can be denied outright, but that they must be transmuted through being placed in the larger context that is opened to view with the growing appreciation of an alternative, soteriological truth, a truth incommensurable with our normal ways of thinking and perceiving. It is at this point that we enter the sphere of the fourth and last noble truth: the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering for all living beings.

Treading the path means cultivating perfect wisdom, and the cultivation of perfect wisdom initially entails a rigorous reevaluation of empirical experience, culminating in the realization that our concepts and percepts have been profoundly influenced by inherited belief structures that cannot be entirely illuminated by any strictly rationalistic analysis. And just as our ideas and perceptions are conditioned by other ideas and perceptions, so every aspect of the contents of perception—every object—necessarily exists in dependence on the others, as well as on its association with a specific, conditioned state of consciousness. Every element of conceptualization and perception owes its individual identity to an interrelated web of causes and conditions, so that it does not bear its meaning or existence in itself, and on this account concepts of a self-sufficient generative matrix or a transcendental ground are inherently problematic. By virtue of its most fundamental nature, as illuminated through the Mādhyamika's deconstructive analysis, all experience is radically contextual. All things are necessarily conditioned and quite empty of independent existence. All words are contingent and devoid of fixed, referential meaning.

When the bodhisattva has begun not only to understand the analysis but to assimilate its implications emotionally and volitionally through having followed the path in all its dimensions for some time, his own tendency to cling begins to fade. No matter how compelling the imaginary referents of words and concepts may seem, he will turn from them and search for truth and reality not in any particular epistemic act or ontic place, but in a form of life expressing a certain attitude toward the context of relations, the whole of everyday experience.

5.2 Wisdom and the nature of illusion

Here one point must again be especially stressed: When the Mādhyamika argues that the world as perceived through the veil of reified thought is *similar* to an illusion, this does not imply that conventional affairs should (or could) be cast aside, as though they were insignificant or adventitious. On the contrary, patient observation of everyday experience is absolutely necessary, for the problematic nature of one's attitude and form of life is revealed solely through an intimate encounter with the world.[9] Unwarranted assumptions and unconscious presuppositions are uncovered and abandoned one after another as the meditator probes deeper and deeper into the nature of conceptual and perceptual processes, continually rejecting static reified concepts as he gains facility with the self-deconstructing symbolic forms of the Mādhyamika. The sense of being in constant relationship begins to permeate all experience. Entities no longer seem to possess intrinsic existence but are perceived as partners produced and sustained in relationships of reciprocal dependence. Eventually it becomes apparent that any form of meaning (truth) and existence (reality) is bound up in this deeply paradoxical nexus of interpenetrating relations.

All concepts are susceptible to reification, yet study and critical reflection play a central role in the soteriological strategy of the Mādhyamika, where key philosophical concepts operate within an interpretive schema that is particularly resistant (though certainly not impervious) to the stultifying influence of inherited natural interpretations. One must learn how to identify and resist the compulsive need to refer the illusion fostered by language and conceptual thought beyond everyday experience to some more sublime reality. The Mādhyamika's argument here actually amounts to insistence that intellectual and spiritual integrity is maintained only by refusing to accept the content of everyday life as accessible to *any* exclusive, ultimately binding symbolic representation. Conventional experience is *mere* appearance only in the sense that there is no truth or reality other than what appears to us in the context of these intertwining relations of meaning and existence:

> The Blessed One clearly demonstrated that things arise in dependence on causes and conditions, and he rejected the possibility that origination could be without cause, from one cause, or from a multiplicity of causes, or that things could be produced from themselves, from what is other than themselves, or from both. By this rejection the conventional (screened) intrinsic nature of conventional things is revealed as it stands: *Dependent origination is itself conventional because it is not produced through any intrinsic being.* From the perspective of the wisdom of the saints, there is no cessation and no movement.[10]

Here is the crux of the paradox that the Mādhyamika asks us to accept. The soteriological truth of the highest meaning, as dependent origination and emptiness, is itself the illusory, conventional truth, because it *necessarily* appears in a self-contradictory, misleading form. In other words, everyday experience is, for the bodhisattva, a necessary fiction.

The doctrine of dependent origination, a fundamental Mādhyamika concept, embraces the entire spectrum of actual and possible states of affairs and describes the circumstances through which the totality of relations that gives meaning and structure to life is experienced as empty and devoid of any foundation for clinging. But this emptiness, which is implied in every aspect of everyday affairs, is no more than a useful designation (a *prajñapti*) to apply in study and practice as a means to a soteriological goal—the end of fear and suffering for all sentient beings.

With this we have circumscribed the territory governed by the first property of wisdom, or "wisdom as a cause," which is a detailed doctrinal presentation of the way in which all mundane experience can be seen as the expression of emptiness. This "seeing" is also referred to as "non-seeing," for there is actually nothing new to see:

> Suppose that a man with diseased eyes is holding a bone-white vase in his hand, and under the influence of an optical defect he sees what appear to be clusters of hair on the surface of the vase. He wants to remove the hairs and so begins to shake the vase when a second man with normal vision happens to pass by. Puzzled as to this odd behavior, the second man approaches and begins to stare at the place where the hairs should appear. Naturally, he apprehends no such hairs, and consequently he forms no conception of existence or nonexistence, of hair or non-hair, nor even of darkness or any other attribute with respect to these hairs. When the man with an optical defect tells the second man about his idea that he sees hairs, then the second man may desire to clarify this misconception by stating that the hairs do not exist. This is indeed a statement of negation; however, the speaker has not in this case rejected [any conventionally real entity]. The man without any optical defect sees the reality of the hairs, while the other man does not. In just the same way, there are those who are stricken with the optical defect of spiritual ignorance so that they are incapable of perceiving the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. The intrinsic being of [conventional things] apprehended by them is itself nothing more than [illusory] conventional form. The blessed buddhas, however, are without any trace of spiritual ignorance, so that they perceive the hairs in the manner of one who is not afflicted with an optical defect; that is, the intrinsic nature of [conventional things] seen by them is itself the truth of the highest meaning. One may ask how it is that they are capable of seeing an intrinsic nature like this, which is invisible. —True, it is invisible, but they "see" it by means of "non-seeing."[11]

What is called for is a new form of life, *one in which people are able to respond to sensory stimulation by seeing it as an instantiation of dependent origination and emptiness, without having to make an intervening inference.*[12] The first property of wisdom therefore acts as an introduction to the concept of emptiness, and it is rooted in what could accurately be called philosophical propaganda. Study and critical reflection provide an intellectual context in which the concept of emptiness can be given a soteriologically efficacious interpretation founded on an appreciation of its application. This first type of wisdom is therefore a "cause" for the actualization of emptiness in a new form of life.

When properly disciplined through study of the Mādhyamika's deconstructive philosophy the intellect is a powerful and efficient guide that can point the bodhisattva in the right direction and even conduct him along the way for some distance. Inherited patterns of conceptualization, perception, and linguistic usage dictate that we either devalue rationalism as mere discursive thought or place a premium on logical precision, or else do both simultaneously, fragmenting ourselves into intellectual and spiritual components that can be welded together only through the power of faith. Here, as elsewhere, the Mādhyamika cuts a middle way between these two extremes. Rational thought should be used, as it is a particularly effective tool, but it is nothing more than a tool, and critical thinking alone is not enough to bring about the actualization of emptiness. The fruit of deconstructive analysis must be allowed to ripen in personal experience. A solid intellectual grasp of the symbolic structure of the Mādhyamika philosophy must be cultivated through practice. In order to proceed, the bodhisattva must learn how to cease clinging to *every* concept of "truth" and "reality"—including emptiness—by waiting patiently and watching with all his attention focused intensely, through meditation, on the network of interpenetrating relations that is gradually revealed through study of the texts and critical reflection on what has been learned. An acute intellectual sensitivity to the fundamentally misguided nature of all attempts to impose an exclusively rational grid on empirical experience is the initial and crucial step in clearing the way for the noninferential experience of emptiness, which constitutes the second property of wisdom. By practicing all the perfections in conjunction with the study of philosophy the bodhisattva grounds understanding of the conceptual tools in increasing proficiency with their soteriological use.

The actualization of emptiness, or "wisdom as an effect," is much more than just another interpretation of the concept. In order to move from wisdom as a cause to wisdom as an effect, one needs to reach an appreciation of the manner in which philosophical understanding becomes something more than rational.

To understand a concept is to understand its use. Whether in philosophy or in day-to-day affairs, there is no meaning apart from use, and therefore "to understand" means "to use a word correctly and to act in accord with its correct usage." For the Mādhyamika correct understanding of a concept can never be grounded in an abstract, privileged notion of truth or in any intuition of an ultimately real substrate. Correct understanding is based on an appreciation of correct behavior, and for any Buddhist, "correct behavior" is defined in soteriological terms: contributing to the liberation of all beings from fear and suffering. Whether or not a concept has been understood is judged by one's facility in using it, and the strictest criterion for verifying an interpretation is the criterion of application. If, for example, a child claims to have understood the concept of counting, his claim is verified by his actually counting. Otherwise his understanding would be nothing more than abstract and sterile theory. According to the Mādhyamika, all veridical concepts are alike in this way, including the concept of emptiness. This is why emptiness and the other primary symbolic forms of the Mādhyamika cannot be understood without taking their purpose into account.[13] It also explains the significance of the distinction between wisdom as cause and as effect.

5.3 Knowledge and practice

It may help to clarify matters at this point if we note that much of the present discussion turns on a single issue: How is a concept—*any* concept—understood? We have already seen that from the Mādhyamika's perspective the meaning of a word or concept invariably derives from its application within a context of sociolinguistic relations and not through reference to any self-sufficient, independently real object. Meaning is ever and always couched within an undulating matrix of natural interpretations that conditions concepts and perceptions, emotional and intellectual needs and desires, and ultimately, conscious and preconscious attitudes toward all of everyday experience. Moreover, it is evident on this account that meaning is flexible and subject to constant, subtle revision. Altogether novel concepts evolve out of the crucible of familiar patterns of thought and perception, altering and amplifying old concepts so that they assume new and various nuances of meaning. Learning occurs neither as an act of will nor through any dramatic intellectual tour de force, nor does it come about spontaneously and entirely without cause. Rather, knowledge evolves through the individual's participation in a process of theoretical and practical training, which enables the adept to perceive directly every aspect of experience as involved in new and unprecedented modes of relationship—both with each other, and with the perceiving consciousness itself. This has been called both a "nonreferential" and a "nonegocentrist" theory of meaning:

> Thus it is precisely the reaffirmation of language, free of any supposed absolute substratum, as a practical, conventional process, an ordinary

> activity of human beings, a "form of life" *(Lebensform)* that sets the non-egocentrist philosopher apart from the skeptic and the mystic, who make the classic absolutist mistake of thinking that lack of an *absolute* basis is no basis at all, lack of an *absolute* process is no process at all, lack of an absolutistic, privately grounded language is no language at all, lack of a mathematically absolute, perfect logic is no logic at all, and so on.[14]

Normally one comes to understand the meaning of a word or concept through a process of socialization, where repeated practice serves to impress upon the mind a pattern of associations out of which the meaning of the word or concept emerges as a single element in the sociolinguistic context which reflects one's entire form of life. Buddhist training, including as it does both theoretical and practical components, replicates this natural process for a similar effect. The meaning of a philosophical concept emerges from a complex fabric of relations gradually woven in study and practice. Meditation is the principal and most powerful tool for incorporating theoretical understanding or belief into the total context of a form of life entailing immediate, noninferential perception of key Buddhist concepts. This process is referred to as "the actualization of emptiness"; "the transformation of wisdom as 'cause' to wisdom as 'effect' "; or "the realization of perfect wisdom."

We are here concerned exclusively with an indirect, inferential or theoretical understanding of emptiness which is, by the standards of the Mādhyamika's approach to language and conceptual thought, a very incomplete and superficial stage of understanding in comparison with knowledge that is fully integrated into the emotional, volitional, and perceptual dimensions of life. Still, even the scholar whose sole and legitimate concern is with wisdom as a cause would never get beyond his own presuppositions by seeking to determine what "emptiness" *refers to*. He or she must learn to ask different sorts of questions and to appreciate the implications of this radically different concept of meaning: "What use is made of the concept of emptiness?" "How is it applied within the context of everyday experience?"

The meaning of the philosophical and soteriological concept of emptiness must be sought for in its application in a specific regimen of training; ultimately, correct understanding must be demonstrated—not merely discussed—by a life founded on nonclinging. In the final analysis, all that can really be said regarding the actualization of emptiness is that one's understanding evolves into the total assimilation of an alternative form of life with its own conceptual and perceptual structure and its own strong sense of commitment and responsibility derived from a very specific set of moral obligations. Previously one was held captive by a picture generated out of the natural interpretations and associated observational languages which exert such a powerful influence over all experience, so that he was unable to think or act with any true clarity. This new form of life is to be absolutely free from the influence of reified thought, and thus completely harmonious with the contextual, relational nature of the world.

Intellectual reflection alone cannot cause such a radical shift not only in behavior, but in the most basic patterns of conceptualization and perception. To this end, both the ability to master theory and the willingness to engage in practical training are necessary, for one must understand how to apply the concept of emptiness. The concern with eliciting this form of behavior and the conceptual and perceptual changes that grow out of it is the only justification, within the Mādhyamika literature, for insistence on the practice of meditation and the other perfections in conjunction with the academic study of philosophy.

It is, of course, quite permissible to pursue the study of Nāgārjuna's philosophy as an entirely academic enterprise. Devoted scholars could go on interpreting the concept of emptiness indefinitely, arguing about its meaning in terms of this or that rationale and setting forth ever more subtle and sophisticated analyses, only to refine them on some subsequent occasion, or to retract them altogether in favor of some new hypothesis. There may come a time, however, when the inherent limitations of this unending process of inquiry begin to be apparent, when the desire to continue begins to feel like a compulsion to go back over the same ground again and again. This is the point at which the problems mentioned in section 1 of this study arise of their own accord.[15]

Where wisdom as an effect is concerned, the scholar must be prepared to look into these and a whole range of new and different questions: What exactly would the word *knowledge* mean in this context? What sort of knowledge is sensed to be necessarily inaccessible to an exclusively text-critical, philological analysis? Under what circumstances does the search for formal interpretation of a text—or of experience—cease to be a significant activity and begin to manifest the signs of an oddly self-perpetuating, compulsive pattern of behavior? All of the preceding questions could be compressed into a single problem: To what extent does the insatiable desire for concepts of epistemic truth and ontic reality constitute the imposition of an unwarranted and essentially manipulative a priori demand on the subject of inquiry, whether it be a single philosophical text or the whole of everyday experience? In the West this way of thinking has its historical roots especially in Descartes and Kant, while in India it may be traced back in part to the influence of Sanskrit grammatical theories on later speculative philosophy. In both cases, however, the demands of rationalism have their own internal dynamic in the emotionally charged network of natural interpretations that give shape not only to the quest for knowledge, but to knowledge itself, and ultimately to all forms of experience.

The problem of rationalism—its inability to break free from its self-imposed demands—is an issue that lies at the heart of the Prasaṅgika's quarrel with rival Buddhist theoreticians, and it is equally relevant to anyone trying to find meaning in the central concepts of the Mādhyamika, for the role of rational thought in the process of understanding is a matter subjected to the most intense scrutiny by Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti: "Although this exposition of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] is profound and frightening, it will certainly be understood by a person who has previously cultivated [his textual study in the practice of meditation]. Any others will never comprehend it, despite the breadth of their learning. One must clearly perceive that all other philosophical systems are composed simply as justification for their own unstated presuppositions."[16]

The Mādhyamika leaves open the possibility that philosophical uncertainty, confusion, and doubt can be resolved once and for all, yet he insists that this happens—that one obtains "true," functional knowledge of the concept of emptiness—only upon mastering its application. In application the concept of emptiness is no different from any other mundane notion (for example, causality or production). Rationalism flounders in paradox and contradiction that need pose no obstacle to practice. The farmer does not question whether or not a sprout is produced from a seed but perceives that it happens through experience unmediated by theory and inference, and he acts accordingly. He plants the seeds so that he and his family can enjoy an autumn harvest. Similarly, the bodhisattva well trained in study and practice of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy no longer questions whether or not all things are in and of themselves "unreal"—he simply perceives this and acts in accordance with what he perceives.

The concept of emptiness is distorted when forced to serve as the object of an inferential judgment, for it cannot be effectively taught through the inculcation of a new system of beliefs or a new set of expectations about the world. On the contrary, one must learn the meaning of emptiness through a meticulous deconstruction of all present beliefs and the entire form of life from which they spring, and this can only be accomplished by engaging in a specific training designed to cultivate an unwavering mindfulness with respect to the most trivial details of day-to-day affairs. An alternative form of life is not necessarily a function of believing or expecting different things about the world in which we live. Liberation from old and deeply engrained patterns of thinking and perceiving need be neither a supernatural nor a miraculous phenomenon, but rather a very mundane affair. Dreams of magic and talk of mystical intuition are all too often merely alternative, slightly more pleasant ways of masking the old destructive patterns of clinging and manipulation. As Gregory Bateson has written, "A miracle is a materialist's idea of how to escape from his materialism. . . . And like applied science, it always proposes the possibility of *control.* So you don't get away from all that way of thought by sequences into which that way of thinking is already built in."[17] Compare Nāgārjuna: "Everyday life *(saṁsara)* is not the slightest bit different from salvation *(nirvaṇa),* nor is salvation the slightest bit different from everyday life."[18] And Candrakīrti: "The Lord of the world taught that no salvation is itself salvation. A knot made by space is released only by space."[19]

In Candrakīrti's writing, the analysis of the Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy is presented as a revolutionary deconstruction of all views and beliefs which seek justification through reference to a set of presuppositions discoverable a priori, regardless of how rational or virtuous or sublime these views and beliefs may seem to those who hold them.[20] Ultimately, given the Mādhyamika's notion of the task of philosophy, the change engendered through rigorous training in application of the concept of emptiness is no abstract matter of cultivating another, alternative view or belief. To actualize emptiness is to affirm one's membership in the universal context of interpenetrating relations which gives meaning and structure to human activity. And this affirmation of membership is registered in a transformation of behavior which simultaneously fosters and is fostered by a change in the nature of one's experience of the everyday world—a world which no longer appears as a collection of intrinsically real, compartmentalized objects, each one dissociated from the others and from a similarly isolated, fragmented "I."

For present purposes, however, the essential point is not whether one in fact endeavors to actualize the concept of emptiness through practice of meditation and the other perfections, but rather that one appreciates how the Mādhyamika's approach to language and conceptual thought is couched in a particular philosophical paradigm. This alternative paradigm defines the task of philosophy in precise terms, through the systematic working out of a way to integrate theoretical understanding consciously and harmoniously with everyday life. I have said that soteriology is built into the philosophy of the Mādhyamika, and that Nāgārjuna's thought is invariably distorted by any specialized analysis that rests on unexamined presuppositions enforcing an arbitrary distinction between "religion" and "philosophy." This claim can now be expanded as follows: First, there is no question that the Mādhyamika literature incorporates a variety of responses to the various ontological and epistemological problems of "normal philosophy" (in the sense of

Kuhn's "normal science," where all members of the intellectual community agree on what counts as a legitimate problem). Second, however, is the important fact that every one of these responses is revolutionary, in the sense that its meaning is self-consciously prescriptive and devoid of any pretension to value-free objectivity. In other words, the central concepts of the Mādhyamika are inextricably linked with a revolutionary approach to the problem of meaning as a problem of application. Given this radically different approach to language and conceptual thought, the meaning of emptiness is to be sought not in a new definition of truth or reality, but in the concept's uniquely efficacious role in actualizing a radically new form of life. Such a form of life takes shape in the ethical and practical dimensions of the Mādhyamika philosophy as well as in its language, which embodies the assumption of "an entire alternative world . . . a dream-world [necessary] in order to discover the features of the real world we think we inhabit."

In philosophical discourse interpretation of a concept remains an ongoing process, but by the standards of the Mādhyamika paradigm an ultimate criterion for "correct" interpretation can and must be offered —the criterion of correct application. If a concept is applied correctly, then what sense does it make to say that it has not been understood? And, by the same token, if it is proposed in isolation from any inherently correct application, then what possible justification can be offered for the claim that a given interpretation ought to be accepted as authoritative, or even viable? Words and concepts are necessarily used within a context of relations between speaker and listener, and meaning is meaning only because of its consequences for the sociolinguistic community.[21] Taking into account both the Mādhyamika's concept of nonreferential meaning and the soteriological purpose of the philosophy, it is evident that the deconstructive analysis presented in *The Entry into the Middle Way* can be properly appreciated only in the full context of its use. The word *emptiness* operates as a key term in the metalanguage of the Mādhyamika philosophy, which draws attention to the groundlessness of all forms of knowledge and belief. It is applied to problems of logic, epistemology, ontology, and ethics in such a way as to play a central role in the overall soteriological strategy.

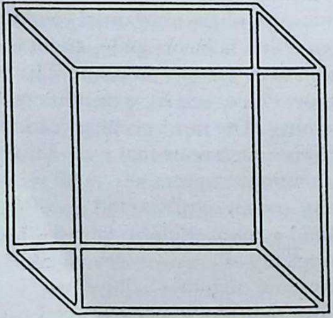
Like any other meaningful concept, then, the concept of emptiness must be understood not through ostensive definition but through ostensive training. In learning to appreciate the Mādhyamika along these lines the boundary between philosophy and religion begins to dematerialize, revealing the arbitrary nature of distinctions it had created and preserved. This is not to confound philosophy with mysticism, or the reverse, but it would be misleading to represent the Mādhyamika solely as a mystical doctrine, as though it were exclusively concerned with religious problems irrelevant to the properly philosophical quest for value-free, objective truth. Both terms—*philosophy* and *religion*—actually belong to a language game based on presuppositions not shared by Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti.

5.4 Nondualistic knowledge

With the actualization of emptiness, manifest in wisdom as an effect, the bodhisattva gains access to the nondualistic knowledge of a buddha. It may be that this concept seems particularly abstruse because it is associated not so much with a way of *knowing* as with a way of *being,* for we have seen that the justification underlying claims to knowledge of this type is necessarily immersed in a certain form of life. The concept is, then, not so obscure as it first appears, since we can find ample evidence for a similar type of knowledge within the course of normal, everyday experience. In fact, a kind of nondualistic knowledge is present wherever a particular epistemic act is embedded in an intuitive awareness of the unique context through which two apparently discrete phenomena are intimately related, as is usually the case, for example, when we speak of a cause and its effect. And one's attention is again directed to the context of a relationship, only in a much more dramatic fashion, through the experience of a bodily sensation like pain. Here both the subject ("I") and the object ("pain") are undeniably present, yet the connection between them is so inextricably lodged in the broader context of their relations, including a wide spectrum of particular historical and situational factors, that this relationship is itself felt to be much more significant than the related subject and object. This is especially evident when the sensation is so overpowering that one feels "swallowed up" in the experience of intense pain or pleasure. The ontological status of an internal object of sensation cannot be defined in isolation from this network of circumstantial conditions. Moreover, the knowledge of such an object is incorrigible, and it is not normally articulated as a proposition to be assessed in terms of its truth or falsehood.[22] Feelings are mere appearance, and have no other reality than the reality manifest in their seeming. The same peculiar features are characteristic of a whole range of epistemic events that we see no need to explain, for example, acts of intention, expectation, and remembering, and assumptions of meaning and structure bound up with our most basic patterns of perception and communication. Clearly this sort of knowledge underlies much, though not all, of everyday life, and it seems to serve as host for parasitic, rational, dichotomizing thought. The Mādhyamika does not advocate any radically unconventional category of epistemic act, but rather a radically unconventional form of life, in which one is constantly and profoundly in touch with the holistic, contextual nature of *all* experience—with "the suchness of dependent origination."

For the bodhisattva, rational, dualistic thinking no longer intrudes upon everyday experience, creating epistemological and ontological distinctions between feelings and so forth, on the one hand, and the material, physical world of objects, on the other. All experience is mere appearance and has no other reality than the reality manifest in how it seems not just to him, but to all sentient beings. In analyzing the contents of everyday experience, deconstructive criticism reveals this much and no more. What is *false* appearance for the average person bound to reified concepts is *mere* appearance for the bodhisattva, and mere appearance is all that there is to reality. One must learn not to look for truth and reality behind or under appearances, but to see both in the context of everyday life, where the soteriological truth of the highest meaning is understood by placing oneself in a harmonious relationship with these same appearances: "When the entities [taken for granted in the context of everyday experience] are examined, they are found to have no intrinsic distinguishing characteristic other than the mark of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. Therefore the conventional truth of everyday experience is not to be critically examined."[23] "The master declared that all things are from the beginning at peace, devoid of production, and by virtue of their intrinsic nature, completely unentangled in suffering."[24]

The nature of this nondualistic knowledge can be hinted at through consideration of the Necker cube, an illustration that has been used in a number of critiques of positivist theories of perception:



Is this a perspectival drawing of a cube from above, or from below? Perhaps it is something else entirely—a polygonally cut gem, or a two-dimensional set of lines. One is tempted to say that it is all these things and more, but no amount of effort will allow us to see them simultaneously. Dualistic, conceptual thought influences perception in such a way that any of these possibilities can only be seen individually, as a self-sufficient, discrete image, but at the same time we are aware of the intimate relations that obtain between the various figures in this drawing. According to the Mādhyamika, a similar but much more convoluted and subtle relationship holds between any two dichotomies of conceptual thought, whether expressed in ontological, epistemological, ethical, or any other terms: Cause/effect, subject/object, substrate/predicate, absolute/relative, truth/error, good/evil, and all other dualistic concepts find their meaning in the context of their elusive relationship with each other and with an interrelated network of other such concepts. The structure that they give to all experience—a structure that seems "to emerge from the things themselves"—is also dependent on an illusion similar to the Necker cube, where each image finds its meaning and existence only in the context of its relationship to partners that must always remain out of sight. The critical difference is only that the context of everyday life in which these other relationships are embedded is infinitely more complex, for it embodies an indeterminate number of historical and circumstantial factors shared by the sociolinguistic community in which this vocabulary is used and thought and perception take place. Nevertheless, a cause can no more be detached from its effect than one image from the other, and neither can the "self" be extracted from the context of its relationship with the "others" that make up all of the sentient and insentient world. Moreover, just as there is no objective, neutral or uninterpreted image available to the subject viewing the drawing above, so it is pointless to refer our concepts and perceptions back to any a priori, uninterpreted ground.

The nature of rational thought and perception is such that it necessarily focuses on one or the other aspect of any dichotomy, as though each was significant in and of itself, entirely apart from its hidden partners. Nondualistic knowledge derives from a noninferential awareness of the total context in which all experience is immersed, and through which it finds its meaning and reality. This context is the constantly fluctuating collocation of elements comprising one's whole form of life. It is necessarily recognized as a constantly fluctuating "state of affairs" and not as a static "thing," so that once the attention is brought to bear unremittingly on the contextual nature of experience, the possibility of reified thought disappears. When we focus our attention on the total context of the Necker cube we still see either one figure or another, but we also *see through* them, for we do not see them as solitary, fragmented images divorced from the context of their peculiar dependence on each other. The difference is one of attitude, for all else remains as it was. Similarly, when the bodhisattva cultivates nondualistic knowledge he both sees and sees through the natural interpretations that structure his world. He sees nothing new or different, but he *knows*, directly and incorrigibly, that all the elements of experience are dependent upon one another and upon the nature of the perceiving consciousness in a very profound and significant way. This dramatic shift in attitude can only come about through mastery of a particular training, entailing a correspondingly dramatic shift in one's form of life.

A buddha or a very advanced bodhisattva is deeply mindful of the relationship between himself and the world. He feels himself to be intimately involved with sentient beings and with insentient things in a way that is analogous to the average person's felt relationship to the object of sensation, so that while subject and object are still present, with or without conscious reflection, their existence and meaning are totally subsumed by the nature of their relationship within a complex matrix of historical and situational criteria. Attention is here completely given over to the total context in which any experience occurs.

5.5 The bodhisattva's vow

What are the characteristics of the world as conceptualized by one who has actualized emptiness? More precisely: What is the bodhisattva's form of life, and what sort of responsibility does it entail?

Like the structures of the inanimate world, all living beings have a dual nature. They are stationed at the crossroads of spirit and matter, sacred and profane, infinite and finite. Animate creatures are bound by the same necessity that governs every element of the inorganic universe. Just as any material body must respond to the pull of gravity, so, inasmuch as all living beings are born, they must also suffer disease, grow old, and die. This is the law of all creation. Here, for better or worse, we must live with a fundamental dichotomy that will forever maintain an opposition between the "I" and the objects and forces perceived as external to it. At the same time, however, within the teachings of Buddhism greater priority is given to another law, the law of the Dharma, and according to the Mādhyamika the workings of this law are revealed in the literature dealing with perfect wisdom *(prajñāpāramitā)* and emptiness.

In their innermost nature living beings are entirely free from any of the categories and qualifications on which language and conceptual thought must depend. For the bodhisattva conventional truth is indistinguishable from the truth of emptiness. Reality simply is as it appears

—regardless of whether "it" appears as saṁsara or nirvaṇa. The constant oscillation and interplay between these and other opposites is the interpenetrating nexus of dependent origination, experienced here in this world in the kaleidoscopic pattern of relations that makes up everyday life. This is what the Mādhyamika means by insisting that the round of birth and death (saṁsara) is itself salvation (nirvaṇa). Obstinate clinging to the poles of any opposition as though they possessed independent, self-contained meaning or reality is associated with the most crippling form of spiritual ignorance, for just this clinging alienates us from the soteriological truth which must be found here in this world, and, according to Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, only here, at the crossroads of being and nothingness. It is an axiomatic principle of Candrakīrti's text, and of all Mādhyamika philosophy, that through immediate and uninterrupted awareness of the emptiness or "suchness" of everyday experience the bodhisattva finds liberation from suffering now—in this life and in this world.

The bodhisattva is a being who has awakened to the emptiness of all things, and what is called the thought of awakening is the growing noninferential awareness of this profound dimension of freedom hidden in the inescapable web of our natural interpretations and associated observational languages. A bodhisattva recognizes that the objects and beings populating the world, and the concepts and percepts through which they and all possible experience take shape, do not possess self-contained meaning or structure, and that everyday life is simply the totality of relations obtaining between these empty dichotomies. The bodhisattva moves with ease along the interface between soteriological and conventional truths. He finds total freedom in conformity to the unyielding necessity of knowledge grounded in mundane experience, and the consummate expression of this freedom is his deep spontaneous commitment to action in accord with his compassion for the myriad empty beings suffering in an empty world:

> One who has set out on the career of a bodhisattva should reflect in the following way: "However many living beings there are gathered together in the universe of beings—egg-born, or born from an embryo, or moisture-born, or miraculously born, with or without form, with ideation, without ideation, with neither ideation nor nonideation—to whatever extent a universe of beings can be designated—all these must be led to release from suffering, to the realm of nirvaṇa which leaves no remainder." Yet although an infinite number of beings may thus be led to nirvaṇa, no being at all is ever led to nirvaṇa. And why is this? If in a bodhisattva the idea of a "being" should occur, then he would not be called a bodhisattva. He is not to be called a bodhisattva in whom the idea of a being should occur or the idea of a sentient creature, or the idea of a real person.[25]

The Mādhyamika's claim that suffering can be somehow mitigated or completely transformed by following the bodhisattva's path is an issue concerning which, from our point of view, no totally convincing justification is likely to be forthcoming. But we may at least come to appreciate just how the central concepts of the literature are integrally aligned with the concept of pain as a context-bound experience. The pain of any individual, or his release from that pain, has no sort of transcendental reference. Although its effect can be transforming, suffering itself is always experienced as mundane fact. The force of pain or grief acts in a very dramatic way to ground the individual in the concerns of the present moment, yet at the same time suffering is in every instance contingent on the entire web of relations that forms the warp and woof of the dependently originated, empty world. For the Mādhyamika this is a matter of tremendous import because it leaves open the possibility that even the experience of physical pain could be altered and invested with a radically different significance by fundamentally altering one's form of life.

Any experience, whether it involves perception of an external, physical object or awareness of a thought or feeling, is always intimately bound up with the quality of its perceiving consciousness. The innermost nature of both consciousness and its objects is therefore invariably a function of this relationship, so that nothing—neither mind itself nor any conceptual or perceptual object—is independently real, fixed, or inalterable. All elements of experience are fluid, dynamic, and constantly evolving in such a way as to reflect the interaction between consciousness and its objects. And within this interaction, where every aspect of experience is deeply conditioned by a network of natural interpretations that are themselves ungrounded and totally subject to historical and circumstantial conditioning, there lies an unlimited potential for growth and transformation.[26]

5.6 Universal compassion, nonclinging, and emptiness

The bodhisattva's universal compassion is both the highest expression of nonclinging and the living instantiation of the philosophical matrix in which it is cast. Without understanding the relationship of compassion, nonclinging, and emptiness, one cannot appreciate the meaning of Nāgārjuna's thought or the true significance of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The Mādhyamika's soteriological philosophy focuses attention directly on the problem of context and relation, dramatically manifest in our need to think and act in harmony with each other and with the rest of the sentient and insentient world in which we live.[27] The primary place this problem holds in the literature signals an unqualified rejection of the usual concern of philosophy with ideas in and for themselves. Such a rejection parallels the turn made by "edifying" philosophers like Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey away from the rationalistic/idealistic tradition which had preceded them. In Rorty's words, "Edifying philosophers [aim] to help their readers, or society as a whole, break free from outworn vocabularies and attitudes, rather than to provide 'grounding' for the intuitions and customs of the present."[28] For the Mādhyamika, no matter how powerful or compelling they are, concepts are to be handled with the same measure of respect and caution given a useful but dangerous tool. One must be especially careful with the concepts of dependent origination and emptiness, however, which should have the single purpose of turning one's attention away from notions of "I" and "mine" and toward the community, including all sentient beings. The focus on context and relation reflects the fact that one necessarily stands in a sociolinguistic community, and that it is both irrational and spiritually fatal not to align oneself with the best interests of the community as a whole. To act and speak at all is to act and speak in the context of the community. Most important, self-knowledge is nothing other than knowledge of one's role in the world community. There is no truly independent "self" which can be stifled by others, for outside this complex web of relations there is no self at all.[29] Therefore, to assume full responsibility for all sentient beings is to realize the highest truth and the deepest meaning of the self. No longer dominated by reified concepts of "I" and "mine," the bodhisattva is directly, noninferentially aware of the world as nothing more than a constantly changing pattern of relationships. He is then firmly rooted, for the first time, in the contextual reality of everyday experience and the concerns most relevant to life in this world. And what could possibly be of greater practical concern to us all than the problem of fear and suffering, which cannot be denied or thrust away by any effort to gratify the individual self?

Stanley Cavell makes the following observation on philosophical notions of "liberation": "Recognizing what we say, in the way that is relevant in philosophizing, is like recognizing our present commitments and their implications; to one person a sense of freedom will demand an escape from them, to another it will require their more total acceptance."[30] The literature which expounds the soteriological philosophy of the Mādhyamika is quite clearly designed to make propaganda for a concept of freedom as "the more total acceptance of our present commitments and their implications." Although deconstructive analysis removes every possible basis for clinging, antipathy, and the delusion of reified thought, still it must be considered propaganda because the Mādhyamika cannot assert any absolutely authoritative, objectively valid grounds for justification of the form of life manifest in the bodhisattva ideal. All the rhetoric (which, taken as a whole, is internally inconsistent) is aimed toward gradually *convincing* us that freedom is to be found in the Buddhist way of life. But such conviction must ultimately give way to training and practice. Philosophy as a methodological exercise in pure rationalism (a sophisticated version of ostensive definition) is incapable of providing an objective foundation for this way of life or any transcendental justification for the ethical ideals of the Buddhist. The rationalist component of the Mādhyamika is merely one of a wide range of propagandistic devices referred to, generically, as "skillful means"; yet the tremendous significance of this fact can easily be underestimated or forgotten when the arguments of the Mādhyamika are divorced, even for the purposes of a "specialized analysis," from the tradition of ritual practice and meditation. The problem is a particularly thorny one, since abject refusal to comply with the vocabulary and propositional structure of epistemologically oriented philosophy cannot but appear highly suspect in a community of intellectuals steeped in the tradition that proceeded from Descartes through Locke and Kant to where it presently endows the scientific, rational world view with its exclusive right to all adjudication in matters of meaning and structure. A number of modern studies demonstrate an awareness of the difficulties involved, and several commentators have begun to recognize this propagandistic element in the Mādhyamika's approach to language and conceptual thought. But so far no one seems to have remarked that the Prāsaṅgika technique is paralleled in the work of modern pragmatist and deconstructive philosophers. When efforts to force Nāgārjuna's work into a neo-Kantian mold fail, as they must, talk almost invariably turns in equally unpromising directions, suggesting that the Mādhyamika is not to be read as philosophy after all, and thus cannot be properly judged by "philosophical" standards. We are told, for example, that Nāgārjuna "had no interest at all in 'objectivity' as Western philosophers define that word."[31] This sort of comment could be made only by someone who has not given adequate consideration to the writings of James, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, and all the others whose work I have been referring to at intervals throughout these pages. This is the sort of confusion we can continue to expect when the best scholars of Buddhist literature isolate themselves behind the walls of a discipline that is defined almost exclusively in terms of a philologically based methodology. Clearly, the concept of objectivity is no longer taken for granted in intellectual circles, and Western philosophers are at present far from reaching any consensus as to its meaning and implications as a methodological strategy. It is therefore important to see how this same article's central thesis, that Nāgārjuna's thought is essentially mystical and consequently not "philosophically cogent,"[32] is unacceptable, primarily because it rests on a number of arbitrary and unexamined premises concerning the nature and task of the sort of enterprise which properly deserves the title "philosophy."[33]

For more than half a century now, philosophy has been construed in ways that altogether avoid the problem of objectivity—ways in which the issue of "reason" versus "mysticism" no longer means what it did to the tradition that rotated on the Descartes-Locke-Kant axis:

> [The epistemologically centered philosopher] wants to be constrained not merely by the disciplines of the day, but by the ahistorical and nonhuman nature of reality itself. This impulse takes two forms—the original Platonic strategy of postulating novel *objects* for treasured propositions to correspond to, and the Kantian strategy of finding *principles* which are definatory of the essence of knowledge, or representation, or morality, or rationality. But this difference is unimportant compared to the common urge to escape the vocabulary and practices of one's own time and find something ahistorical and necessary to cling to. It is the urge to answer questions like "Why believe what I take to be true?" "Why do what I take to be right?" by appealing to something *more* than the ordinary, retail, detailed, concrete reasons which have brought one to one's present view. This urge is common to nineteenth-century idealists and contemporary scientific realists, to Russell and to Husserl; it is definatory of the Western philosophical tradition, and of the culture for which that tradition speaks. James and Dewey stand with Nietzsche and Heidegger in asking us to abandon that tradition, and that culture.[34]

If the linguistic interpretation has any force, then we must assume that Nāgārjuna would himself have seen any philosophical project whatsoever as either inherently dissociated from the real, day-to-day concerns of human activities (and hence meaningless and insignificant), or propagandistic in the sense just defined. It is to the Mādhyamika's credit and to the credit of more than one modern Western philosopher, that they have not attempted to escape from the ramifications of this admittedly disconcerting "view that is no view." This realization that all significant philosophical enterprises necessarily function as intellectual propaganda most clearly distinguishes the writings of these philosophers from those of their colleagues both in the East and in the West.

> NĀGĀRJUNA: We contend that you do not know the application ('purpose' or 'use,' *prayojana*) of emptiness . . . and therefore you are lost.[35]

> WITTGENSTEIN: I am in a sense making propaganda for one style of thinking as opposed to another. I am honestly disgusted with the other. . . . Much of what I am doing is persuading the people to change their style of thinking.[36]

The characterization of philosophy as propaganda is valuable because it stands in dramatic defiance of all attempts to hypostatize this or that definition of "philosophical cogency." It acts as a barometer to gauge one's attachment to the concept of philosophy as a search for eternally sanctified, ahistorical, inalterable truth(s) to be attained through the proper application of an approved methodology. Insofar as the notion of philosophy as propaganda precludes gratification of the desire to fall back on unexamined presuppositions about what constitutes a legitimate philosophical problem, it insures that the Mādhyamika's holistic, contextual approach to meaning and existence as functions of relation will not be misinterpreted, either as a species of nonphilosophical mysticism or as what Alvin Gouldner calls a "classic" theory of objective truth. Both those interpretations are examples of extremes that for dichotomous, reified thought seem the only available alternatives.

Let us take a closer look at the notion of philosophical objectivity, for it harbors a number of ambivalent meanings relevant to the present discussion. As mentioned above, Gouldner has investigated the anachronistic, although highly treasured and virtually inextinguishable, concept of truth as a quest for value-free objectivity:

> The classical, older notion of objectivity stressed that truth was the product of applying specific *methods* to particular intellectual tasks and data. Its focal assumption was that truth was produced essentially by an individual scholar and the approved method. But what grounds were there for a confidence in the scholar's motives for *conformity* to the right method? What was defocalized here was the social aspect of the process: namely, that the scholar as a scholar was the product of a social system that had trained and awarded him his credentials; that as a mature scholar he worked as a member of a scholarly community; that he had to convince its members of the warrantability of his assertions, and that he sought to do so by employing the rules, methods and criteria that his community sanctioned, as a rhetoric.[37]

The Mādhyamika quite clearly recognizes no possibility of "objective truth" defined in these terms, but it does not follow that the literature is not and cannot be philosophically cogent. In contrast to the classical notion, Gouldner defines an alternative concept of truth as a fluid, dynamic process of theory formation. This "modern" view of truth avoids the pitfalls of hypostatized categories through its responsiveness to the varying demands of social and linguistic conventions: "The modern view then, sees truth as the product of a rhetoric and collective appraisal of the warrantability of assertions about the social world, as a world-referencing judgement that is collectively construed and which does not have an unmediated availability, either as subjective 'intuition' or as objective 'evidence.' "[38]

This second "view" of truth is compatible with the Mādhyamika's rejection of all views, for both Candrakīrti and Gouldner agree in principle that "things claimed may be factually so, and statements made may be logically and factually correct; but that is not necessarily 'truth.' For the sociology of cognition truth comes down to the perspectives by which even logically and factually correct propositions may be limited. Truth has to do with the limits of reason."[39] Elsewhere in the same article Gouldner works out a concept of "new objectivity," which deserves to be appropriated as a hermeneutic for appreciating the Mādhyamika's deconstructive philosophy as a particular instantiation of "skillful means"—a corrective or cure for deep-rooted obsessions with any possible picture of the world. As with any medicine, the prescription must be adapted to the specific symptoms of the patient—that is, to his own systemic peculiarities, which stem, in this case, from the natural interpretations and related observational languages that condition his entire form of life—and to the general pathology of reified thought:

> "Objectivity," then, is not neutrality; it is realism concerning our own situation, desires and interests. Here "realism" means being aware of the continual vulnerability of reason to interest and desire, of the limits that interest and desire impose on rational discourse. Objectivity, then, is a wholeness paradoxically pursued by stressing insistently and *one-sidedly* the repressed and silenced side of things. It is the effort to overcome the varied and changing limitations of persons and groups through recovery of what their lives have systemically repressed, distorted, and lost.[40]

The Mādhyamika could be understood in terms of this "new objectivity," but it is misleading to characterize Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti as the proponents of a mystical, alogical, or irrational system unconcerned with the proper business of philosophy, namely, the search for objective truth conceived in what Gouldner identifies as its classical formulation. Such an interpretation does a tremendous disservice to Nāgārjuna's thought. It fails to engage with the profound and disturbing challenge issued by this ancient Buddhist philosopher. Without a doubt, the single most controversial and revolutionary feature of Nāgārjuna's legacy lies in his restructuring of the philosophical enterprise so as entirely to discredit the quest for value-free, ahistorical verities supposed to reflect a similarly transcendental reality. In pursuing the analysis this far, Nāgārjuna and his successors were simply working out the further consequences of the earlier Buddhist doctrine of selflessness *(nairātmya),* which had already begun the process of deconstruction that reached its climax in the scriptures dealing with perfect wisdom (*prajñāpāramitāsūtras*). Although it arose out of a culture remote from our own and was harnessed to the soteriological interests of Indian philosophy, the Mādhyamika's critique seems to have anticipated many of the concerns of twentieth-century philosophers rebelling against the established authority of neo-Kantian scientific rationalism. Consider, for example, what Rorty characterizes as the "existentialist" view of objectivity:

> Objectivity should be seen as conformity to the norms of justification (for assertions and for actions) we find about us. Such conformity becomes dubious and self-deceptive only when seen as something more than this—namely, as a way of obtaining access to something which "grounds" current practices of justification in something else. Such a "ground" is thought to need no justification, because it has become so clearly and distinctly perceived as to count as a "philosophical foundation." This is self-deceptive not simply because of the general absurdity of thinking that the vocabulary used by present science, morality, or whatever has some privileged attachment to reality which makes it *more* than just a further set of descriptions. Agreeing with the naturalists that redescription is not "change of essence" needs to be followed up by abandoning the notion of "essence" altogether.[41]

In the modern struggle to escape from our deep attachment to the notion of essence we find a powerful heuristic for Nāgārjuna's rejection of all philosophical views: "Those who see in it [any reference to] intrinsic and extrinsic being, or existence and nonexistence, do not see the actual teaching of the buddha."[42]

This denial of the concept of essence can best be appreciated by contrasting the antiphilosophical language of the Mādhyamika with a modern statement of epistemological monism analogous to the one presented in the Vedāntic view of a nondual, transcendental reality. Mark C. Taylor develops such a view of truth and existence as functions of relation and context which is reminiscent of the complexity attained by pre-Copernican models of the solar system constructed in an attempt to accommodate the mounting pressure for an altogether new observational language. In his densely worded essay we can feel the tension involved in Taylor's effort to hold onto the presuppositions and the vocabulary of the epistemological problematic against the onslaught of deconstructive, pragmatic philosophy and philosophical hermeneutics:[43]

> Epistemological and semantic considerations suggest the perspectival relativity of truth. The historicity of consciousness establishes the inescap-

> able situatedness of the knowing subject. Cognitive activity arises through the confluence of multiple conditioning factors, and issues in knowledge that invariably bears the mark of the situation within which it is generated. Moreover, we have seen that meaning is contextual. Meaning remains unspecifiable apart from dialogic relation with alternative points of view. The synchronic and diachronic extensiveness of such relationality implies that meaning is inexhaustible and ever revisable. Consequently the meaningfulness of truth necessarily entails dialectical relation with contrasting frames of interpretation and is constantly subject to re-formation. Truth emerges only through the synchronic and diachronic interplay of truths. In sum, truth is relative to the perspective from which it is apprehended and is co-relative with implicated truths whose reciprocity it presupposes.
>
> The relativity of the *ordo cognoscendi,* however, does not necessarily distort the *ordo essendi.* To the contrary, the relationality of being is accurately comprehended only in truth that is relative. Like thought, being is inherently dialectical. In other words, that which thought seeks to grasp is itself relative. As a result of the sociality of being, determinate identity assumes concretion through internal relation with difference. Particular phenomena are posited by an extensive mutual interaction that forms a single complex web. Our ontological investigation has shown the synchronic and diachronic coordinates of constitutive relationality. Determinate identity is established through association with coexisting entities and through location within temporal process. Due to the historical unfolding of multiple ingredient relations, being is always in the process of becoming. Dynamic, dialectical actuality cannot be re-presented in static, sharply delineated categories of cognition. If such being is to be known, it must be grasped relative to otherness from which it is inseparable, and must be regularly re-constructed as it re-constructs. As an adequate reflection of the energetics of being, truth changes—it requires constant re-visioning.[44]

This article is especially useful for our present purposes because it constitutes "an attempt to demonstrate that relativism is mandated both epistemologically and ontologically."[45] Taylor has done everything possible to stretch the neo-Kantian paradigm and adapt it to a vision of truth and reality not susceptible to reification, and yet, in retaining what Rorty calls "the ocular metaphor," he is ultimately compelled to ground his philosophical view in references to an ahistorical, essentially metaphysical epistemology. This is explicit from the beginning, when he writes, "As the argument unfolds, it will become apparent that the only thing that is not relative is relativity itself."[46] Taylor's concept of nonrelative relativity is particularly instructive for us because it stands in direct contrast, forming a sort of minimal pair, to Nāgārjuna's complete rejection of the ocular metaphor. The Mādhyamika's total deconstruction of even its own key concepts is epitomized in "the emptiness of emptiness" *(śūnyatāśunyatā)*—a self-deconstructing concept that throws into relief many difficult and controversial passages that are incommensurable with the Vedāntic or Kantian language game and simply cannot be interpreted according to its rules.[47]

The conceptual system of the Mādhyamika has been characterized as philosophical propaganda in order to stress this crucial point of the emptiness of emptiness, which provides no a priori justification for *any* view or belief. As I have attempted to demonstrate in a number of ways over the course of the preceding pages, the difficulties of coming to terms with such a doctrine cannot be resolved strictly by recourse to extended critical discussion. Indeed, intellectual resistance to this seemingly unrelieved relativism assumes various and subtle forms, even among those most inclined to accept the premises and the aim of Nāgārjuna's soteriological philosophy.[48] Fears of relativism and irrationality need to be seen in this light as stemming from a failure of imagination, for once they are understood as such we can entirely break free of both the problem *and* its various solutions. The extremes of nihilism and epistemological monism find a parallel in the phenomenon described by Kuhn and Feyerabend in their discussions of incommensurablility, where large segments of the scientific community—the practitioners of "normal science"—are left behind during times of revolutionary change to such an extent that they do not even realize that a revolution has occurred.

Resistance to a new language game is signaled either by a vain effort to make do with the old terminology, as with Taylor and so many modern scholars who rely on the vocabulary of rationalistic/idealistic methodologies to interpret the Mādhyamika, or else by accusing those who insist on not participating in the normal conversation of relativism and irrationality, as has been done by the proponents of the nihilistic interpretation.[49] In both cases we detect a response to the problem of incommensurability, since these resistances "oppose not just the truth of the resisted alternatives but the presumption that an alternative has been presented." Only by seeing these accusations in this way can we escape to something completely new.

> "Relativism" only seems to refer to a disturbing view, worthy of being refuted, if it concerns *real* theories, not just philosophical theories. Nobody really cares if there are incompatible alternative formulations of a categorical imperative, or incompatible sets of categories of the pure understanding. We *do* care about alternative, concrete, detailed cosmologies, or alternative, concrete, detailed proposals for political change. When such an alternative is proposed, we debate it, not in terms of categories or principles but in terms of the various concrete advantages and disadvantages it

> has. The reason relativism is talked about so much among Platonic and Kantian philosophers is that they think being relativistic about philosophical theories—attempts to "ground" first-level theories—leads to being relativistic about the first-level theories themselves. If anyone really believed that the worth of a theory depends upon the worth of its philosophical grounding, then indeed they would be dubious about physics, or democracy, until relativism in respect to philosophical theories had been overcome. Fortunately, almost nobody believes anything of the sort.[50]

To address the philosophical problem of irrationalism in connection with the Mādhyamika, we must first understand what the accusation of irrationalism means in the context of its historical roots in our own intellectual tradition. Only then will we appreciate the difficulties that must be overcome in order to present this remote literature as an interesting and cogent contribution to the conversation of modern Western philosophers.

> Questions about irrationalism have become acute in our century because the sullen resentment which sins against Socrates, which withdraws from conversation and community, has recently become articulate. Our European intellectual tradition is now abused as "merely conceptual" or "merely ontic" or as "committed to abstractions." Irrationalists propose such rubbishy pseudo-epistemological notions as "intuition" or "an inarticulate sense or tradition" or "thinking with the blood" or "expressing the will of the oppressed classes." Our tyrants and bandits are more hateful than those of earlier times because, invoking such self-deceptive rhetoric, they pose as intellectuals. Our tyrants write philosophy in the morning and torture in the afternoon; our bandits alternately read Hölderlin and bomb people into bloody scraps. So our culture clings, more than ever, to the hope of the Enlightenment, the hope that drove Kant to make philosophy formal and rigorous and professional. We hope that by formulating the *right* conceptions of reason, of science, of thought, of knowledge, of morality, the conceptions which express their *essence,* we shall have a shield against irrationalist resentment and hatred. . . . For the traditional, Platonic or Kantian philosopher . . . the possibility of *grounding* the European form of life—of showing it to be more than European, more than a contingent human project—seems the central task of philosophy. He wants to show that sinning against Socrates is sinning against our nature, not just against our community. So he sees the pragmatist as an irrationalist. The charge that pragmatism is "relativistic" is simply his first unthinking expression of disgust at a teaching which seems cynical about our deepest hopes. . . . [The pragmatist] seems to be sacrificing our common European project to the delights of purely negative criticism.[51]

I have not referred again and again to the writings of deconstructionist and pragmatic philosophers because I believe that these modern thinkers are saying the same thing as the ancient Mādhyamika. Instead, I introduce these writings to help us approach the Mādhyamika literature as something other than an historical relic from a distant culture with nothing interesting or relevant to contribute to our present conversation. Previous attempts to understand the Mādhyamika's rejection of all philosophical views have been of limited value because they failed to engage with the revolutionary message these texts might carry to us across the centuries. To meet this challenge we require a hermeneutic that does justice both to the texts and to our participatory role in textual interpretation—"a hermeneutical discovery of how to translate them without making them sound like fools."[52] As Gadamer has written, "We cannot understand without wanting to understand, that is, without wanting to let something be said. . . . A kind of anticipation of meaning guides the effort to understand from the very beginning."[53] In imposing a strictly philological or text-critical methodology upon these texts, or, conversely, by seeking access to Nāgārjuna's and Candrakīrti's message in an ahistorical *mens auctoris,* we deny the very possibility of understanding:

> Here we find the well-known problem that Heidegger analyzed under the title of the hermeneutical circle. The problem concerns the astounding naiveté of the subjective consciousness that, in trying to understand a text, says "But that is what is written here!" Heidegger showed that this reaction is quite natural, and often enough a reaction of the highest self-critical value. But in truth there is nothing that is simply "there". Everything that is said and is there in the text stands under anticipations. This means, positively, that only what stands under anticipations can be understood at all, and not what one simply confronts as something unintelligible. The fact that erroneous interpretations also arise from anticipations and, therefore, that the prejudices which make understanding possible also entail possibilities of misunderstanding could be one of the ways in which the finitude of human nature operates. A necessarily circular movement is involved in the fact that we read or understand what is there, but nonetheless see what is there with our own eyes (and our own thoughts).[54]

If we are interested in these texts not simply as "philological material," but as "sacred texts which proclaim a message of salvation,"[55] then we must let them speak to us in the only way we can understand such a message—in a voice that incorporates, illuminates, and challenges the prejudices and presuppositions that are a part of our cultural and linguistic inheritance. One need sacrifice neither rational standards nor philological rigor in order to make room for the anticipation of meaning that allows for understanding. Here is the challenge: We need to discover if the Mādhyamika's rejection of all views can be understood not in the anachronistic context of a logical or epistemological problematic, but as a significant contribution to the general force of a movement that is vital to our present philosophical conversation, for this is the place where philosophical meaning must be sought and found. What might this denial of all views mean *to us?*

> Whereas less pretentious revolutionaries can afford to have views on lots of things which their predecessors had views on, edifying philosophers have to decry the very notion of having a view, while avoiding having a view about having views. This is an awkward, but not impossible, position. Wittgenstein and Heidegger manage it fairly well. One reason they manage it as well as they do is that they do not think that when we say something we must necessarily be expressing a view about a subject. We might just be *saying something*—participating in a conversation rather than contributing to an inquiry. Perhaps saying things is not always saying how things are. Perhaps saying *that* is itself not a case of saying how things are. Both men suggest we see people as saying things, better or worse things, without seeing them as externalizing inner representations of reality. But this is only their entering wedge, for then we must cease to see ourselves as *seeing* this, without beginning to see ourselves as seeing something else. We must get the visual, and in particular the mirroring, metaphors out of our speech altogether. To do that we have to understand speech not only as not the externalizing of inner representations, but as not a representation at all. We have to drop the notion of correspondence for sentences as well as for thoughts, and see sentences as connected with other sentences rather than with the world. We have to see the term "corresponds to how things are" as an automatic compliment paid to successful normal discourse rather than as a relation to be studied and aspired to throughout the rest of discourse. To attempt to extend this compliment to feats of *abnormal* discourse is like complimenting a judge on his wise decision by leaving him a fat tip: it shows a lack of tact. To think of Wittgenstein and Heidegger as having views about how things are is not to be wrong about how things are, exactly; it is just poor taste. It puts them in a position which they do not want to be in, and in which they look ridiculous.[56]

As I have already pointed out, the linguistic and conceptual forms of inquiry dictate in advance the sort of answers one will receive. This is why certain teachings are by nature esoteric. The soteriological truth can be taught only in terms of the presuppositions of those who seek to understand: "Just as a grammarian would teach even the alphabet, so the buddha taught the Dharma to his disciples according to the dictates of the particular situation. To some he taught a doctrine that would discourage sinning; to some, a doctrine to aid in earning merit; and to some, a doctrine not based on duality, a means to attain awakening, profound and frightening, the source of emptiness and compassion."[57]

The circle of objectivity and relativism must be broken if one is to learn anything truly revolutionary. Let us, then, avail ourselves of the example provided by these philosophers to forge a hermeneutical tool with which we can translate Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti without making them sound like either fools or epistemologists.

The entire conceptual edifice of the Mādhyamika must be allowed to collapse in on itself in order to fulfill its purpose. It must not leave a trace of even the most refined and ultrararefied concept of emptiness to which the mind could cling. When its philosophical work is done, the concept of emptiness dematerializes along with every possible justification for belief in any reality beyond the sociolinguistic matrix of everyday experience. At that juncture, for the meditative practitioner, the mind becomes extremely attentive and open to the "suchness" of the present moment. There is then no grasping and pushing away, no personal stake in the dividing, categorizing, and criticizing activity of intellectual processes that are normally steeped in a manipulative, self-centered energy.

Not only has the philosophical rug been jerked from beneath our feet, but the ground of conceptualization and perception has eroded away as well. When the concept of emptiness self-deconstructs it takes the whole system with it. There is no central concern here with the accumulation of new and more precise technical terminology. The Mādhyamika is radically deconstructive, pragmatic philosophy designed to be *used* for exposing, defusing, and dismantling the reifying tendencies inherent in language and conceptual thought. And as bare critique, devoid of any claim to an independently valid view, this philosophy offers no answers. All it does is dissolve the old questions, which are seen to have been misguided from the start, leaving behind nothing other than a dramatic awareness of the living present—an epiphany of one's entire form of life. No form of conceptual diffusion remains, and no questions begging for answers that reinforce a deep-seated resistance to acceptance that this life, as it is now lived, is the only arbiter of truth and reality—a truth and reality that is, for the majority of people, dominated by clinging, antipathy, and delusion. If there is any possible alternative—any other form of life—then it can be realized only through the unified and profoundly creative activity of mind, speech, and body.

As one immediate repercussion of this restructuring of philosophy, it is evident that the ethical doctrine of the Mādhyamika (like any other ethic) must ultimately be grounded in a particular form of life which is itself groundless. In the final analysis, the Mahāyāna Buddhist conceptualization of the world, epitomized in such central notions as "dependent origination" and "emptiness," must be called upon to provide its own justification through the freedom from fear and suffering which it is supposed to yield. Achieved in a manner which conforms in every way to the legitimate demands of reason, this ideal of freedom, rather than any objective fact or mystical intuition, is the soteriological truth of emptiness propagated by the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition in almost all its forms:

> Through all circumstances of historic spread and change . . . the idea of the great compassion has remained a constant factor. In popular religious imagination it is symbolized by images in temples, images of wise and merciful Buddhas, of great, heroic, self-sacrificing Bodhisattvas, on whose altars burn lights and incense, before whom prayers are uttered, and whose names are chanted in longing and in hope. They represent a notion that out of some infinite store of pity and of love, help is to be had amid the sufferings of life. Among the devout there is belief that their own deeds of kindness and mercy accumulate some merit toward a general good which Buddhas and Bodhisattvas approve. And among the learned there is awareness of the deep tradition that highest knowledge should be for the welfare of all the living.[58]

It is most unfortunate that there are those among us who willfully endeavor to avoid all responsibilities to society and to nature. Yet according to the Mādhyamika the real tragedy of this and all times is that there are so many others who simply do not know how to begin to think and act in order to see these obligations clearly and carry them out with dignity and strength. To this second group in particular Candrakīrti's writing is addressed, for it is here assumed that philosophy can set itself no more noble, authentic, or pressing task than to contribute toward the dissolution of an intellectual and spiritual malaise that results in tremendous conflict and misery. Whether or not such an assumption can be justified is, of course, open to debate. But the terms of the debate will be entirely defined by the depth of our encounter with the texts.

The Entry into the Middle Way is the literary artifact of a time and place extremely remote from the modern world of affluent capitalistic society in Europe and North America, and it would be pointless to deny that there exist a number of real problems concerning the extent to which Buddhist philosophy might be capable of answering our deepest intellectual and spiritual needs. If these problems are ever to be explored, however, it will not suffice either to confront this material merely as an historical object to be dissected by an exclusive club of philologists or to expropriate it uncritically in the guise of an exotic new style of belief, as though this complex fusion of mythology and philosophy could be conveyed in "literal" translation across such an awesome cultural gulf and simply paraded about in public, like a set of royal vestments brought from some foreign court, without making a rather comical and pathetic spectacle out of what was once a truly majestic literature. Both text-critical rigor and devotion have their rightful place among the concerns of certain groups of individuals within this society, and each has its own valuable contribution to make in the Western encounter with Buddhism. But the challenge of coming to terms with the Mādhyamika demands a greater capacity for self-critical awareness than either model has yet been able to demonstrate.

Perhaps one major problem that faces us in any attempt to form a clear concept of Buddhist philosophy is, in the end, the sociological circumstance that we have no cultural role model which embodies the range of concerns proper to the traditional Indian philosopher (either the *dārśanika* or the *śramaṇa*), whose needs and interests were principally governed neither by the exclusively intellectual disposition of the scholar, nor by the pious faith of the devotee, but by the willingness to use any resource in the search for a form of truth that would do justice to both the intellect and the spirit. Without any well-defined context for such an activity, there is naturally no legitimate arena for dealing with the special problems generated by a text like *The Entry into the Middle Way.* Any attempt to discover or define a viable hermeneutic for this literature must come up against social as well as intellectual barriers. And yet Western philosophers may be trapped at an impasse, for according to the Mādhyamika no entirely rational solution will ever be able to escape the dichotomy between objectivity and relativism. One hundred years ago Nietzsche wrote, "We enter into a realm of crude fetishism when we summon before consciousness the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language, in plain talk, the presuppositions of reason."[59] Since Wittgenstein there has been a growing concern with the transformation or "end" of philosophy. If we are involved in something similar to the paradigm shift described by Kuhn, then there is a good possibility that reason may have to be assigned a significantly different role in any new conception of philosophy. Derrida, for example, has already considerably broadened the parameters within which rational discourse can take place. Rorty's idea of philosophy as a conversation may go far enough to avoid the impasse, but in any case the Mādhyamika offers us an interesting alternative in its radically pragmatic approach to the problem of objectivity and relativism. Here philosophy is conceived of neither as an attempt to define an ahistorical ground, nor as a continuing intellectual conversation, but as the working out of a "justified prejudice" productive of knowledge grounded in a new form of life. Of course a great deal of work remains to be done before any concept of the Mādhyamika's philosophical project will become completely intelligible, for at present even our translations of the texts are for the most part suffused with presuppositions of method and objectivity. The opposition in Buddhist studies between text-critical and proselytic scholarship mirrors the isolation of philosophy and religion as two distinct fields of human endeavor. Both dichotomies reflect the quarrel between reason and tradition that is at the heart of our legacy from the enlightenment, and we are only beginning to be able to see beyond these polarities to something radically different. Nevertheless, "the overcoming of all prejudices, this global demand of the enlightenment, will prove to be itself a prejudice, the removal of which opens the way to an appropriate understanding of our finitude, which dominates not only our humanity, but also our historical consciousness."[60]

What, then, is the most prudent course under the circumstances, that we might work toward an interpretation which is not in open conflict with either Buddhist or modern Western concepts of philosophy? My investigations suggest that the significance of Nāgārjuna's and Candrakīrti's work must today, more than ever, be judged in terms of its authors' own assertion of a justified prejudice. Carefully taking into account "the limits of reason" as well as its necessary and legitimate claims, the meaning that this or any other philosophy has for us can perhaps be measured by no higher standard than as a function of its practical consequences for the individual, for society, and for all forms of life. The most important question would then be: Through incorporating a vocabulary that seeks neither to deny nor otherwise to contradict or denigrate all the evidence that can and must be accepted by the canons of reason, does this philosophy serve to reduce or to augment the fear and suffering caused by clinging, antipathy, and the delusion of reified thought? This is the standard against which Buddhist philosophy has traditionally measured its own worth, and one which is enforced with an extreme degree of subtlety and precision in the deconstructive analysis of the Mādhyamika. This same criterion may offer the possibility of a congenial meeting ground for two disparate traditions as well, and a realistic vantage point from which we can begin to assess the philosophical cogency of the Mādhyamika literature.

I began section 5 with two epigraphs, one from the work of Jonathan Culler and one from Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakaśāstra,* and we have now arrived at a point where these two short quotations can be appreciated in the larger context of all that has been discussed. The interest of the modern deconstructionist may be seen to coincide in significant ways with that of the ancient Indian Mādhyamika, so that we can legitimately expect to gain a great deal from further study of deconstructionist writings which furnish both a heuristic for appreciating the techniques and goals of a text like *The Entry into the Middle Way* and a means of augmenting the repository of rhetorical devices available to the Mādhyamika's own deconstructive project. We have seen how conventional practice, which is structured by natural interpretations and expressed in terms of an associated observational language, itself provides the concepts and premises that are both employed and undermined by the Mādhyamika's analysis. What is revealed through this analysis is the soteriological "truth" of emptiness: a self-deconstructive concept that is gradually transmuted into a new natural interpretation capable of freeing the bodhisattva from the previously inveterate tendency to solidify experience into a ground for clinging. As Culler points out, however, "Deconstruction is ambiguously or uncomfortably positioned and particularly open to attack and misunderstanding. Relying on distinctions that it puts in question, exploiting oppositions whose philosophical implications it seeks to evade, it can always be attacked both as an anarchism determined to disrupt any order whatever and, from the opposite perspective, as an accessory to the hierarchies it denounces."[61] Certainly the history of Western interpretation of Mādhyamika literature supplies adequate evidence for this observation. Such errors of interpretation must be avoided by resisting the temptation to look for a systematic, unified theory of truth in deconstruction. The goal of deconstructive analysis is not the establishment of an authoritative new view or theory, as a common criticism of its unorthodox methods reveals:

> Often . . . the objection to this double procedure is stated in a figure that invokes not the authority of a law or morality but a physical and empirical inappropriateness: deconstruction's procedure is called "sawing off the branch on which one is sitting." This may be, in fact, an apt description of the activity, for though it is unusual and somewhat risky, it is manifestly something one can attempt. One can and may continue to sit on a branch while sawing it. There is no physical or moral obstacle if one is willing to risk the consequences. The question then becomes whether one will succeed in sawing it clear through, and where and how one might land. A difficult question: to answer one would need a comprehensive understanding of the entire situation—of the resilience of the support, the efficacy of one's tools, the shape of the terrain—and an ability to predict accurately the consequences of one's work. If "sawing off the branch on which one is sitting" seems foolhardy to men of common sense, it is not so for Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, and Derrida; for they suspect that if they fall there is no "ground" to hit and that the most clear-sighted act may be a certain reckless sawing, a calculated dismemberment or deconstruction of the great cathedral-like trees in which Man has taken shelter for millennia.[62]

We may now confidently add Nāgārjuna's name to the list of those who are not afraid of hitting ground.

What is especially critical here is that conventional practice establishes the terms of the Mādhyamika's deconstructive analysis, and for that very reason conventional practice can never be abandoned. Instead it is exposed for what it is—a necessary fiction, "the truth of the screen," similar to what Ernest Becker has called "a cultural illusion." According to Becker, all forms of cultural illusion are embodiments of the altogether human need to behave as though we were intrinsically existent and intrinsically powerful, to act as heroes and heroines in the drama of life.

> True there is a great deal of falseness and self-deception in the cultural *causa-sui* project, but there is also the necessity of this project. Man needs a "second" world, a world of humanly created meaning, a new reality that he can live, dramatize, nourish himself in. "Illusion" means creative play at its highest level. Cultural illusion is a necessary ideology of self-justification, a heroic dimension that is life itself to the symbolic animal. To lose the security of heroic cultural illusion is to die—that is what "deculturation" of primitives means and what it does. It kills them or reduces them to the animal level of chronic fighting and fornication.[63]

When the full implications of this concept of cultural illusion are grasped, a final, most disturbing question arises: "On what level of illusion does one live?"

> What is the "best" illusion under which to live? Or, what is the most legitimate foolishness? If you are going to talk about life-enhancing illusion, then you can truly try to answer the question of which is "best." You will have to define "best" in terms that are directly meaningful to man, related to his basic condition and his needs. I think the whole question would be answered in terms of how much freedom, dignity, and hope a given illusion provides. These three things absorb the problem of natural neurosis and turn it into creative living.[64]

Becker's arguments are compelling; yet unlike Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, in the end he does not seem to have realized that the maximum degree of freedom, hope, and dignity can be found within a cultural illusion only when one is completely released from bondage to the forms of that illusion, when the structure of the illusion reveals itself with perfect clarity and one is allowed to see it as it is—as both fictitious and necessary. This is the promise elaborated through the Mahāyāna ideal of the bodhisattva, who lives and acts in the noninferential unity of emptiness and awareness.

> "Honorable Subhūti, is there no goal and no full realization [of that goal]?" . . . "Honorable Śāriputra, the goal and full realization [of that

> goal] certainly do exist, but not in the form of both [soteriological and conventional truths]. Śāriputra, both the goal and its full realization are simply everyday realities. [All of the various levels of spiritual attainment including] the bodhisattva are mere conventional realities. From the perspective of the highest meaning, however, there is no goal and no full realization."[65]

There is very definitely an illusion, but there is no ground to which the illusion refers, nor is there any reason to imagine that the Mādhyamika's deconstructive analysis culminates in a brave new world of the spirit where all possibility of contradiction and diversity is resolved. We must turn the conversation from talk of resolution, which the Mādhyamika's own analysis cannot sustain, to discussion of an insight or attention—a refined, purified love of *this world*—that never ceases to illuminate, destabilize, and simultaneously affirm differences which are themselves supported by other, suppressed forms of illusory differences.

PART TWO

THE ENTRY INTO THE MIDDLE WAY

SOURCES FOR THE TRANSLATION

The Entry into the Middle Way (Skt. *Madhyamakāvatāra*) was originally composed in 330 metered stanzas of Sanskrit verse, of which only 43 have thus far been recovered in full or part as citations in various other extant Sanskrit treatises. Neither the original Sanskrit of Candrakīrti's text nor his autocommentary is presently available, so we must rely on a Tibetan translation of both done by the Tibetan scholar Pa tshab Nyi ma grags in collaboration with an Indian Pandit named Ṭilakakalasa sometime during the eleventh century A.D. This translation was probably produced between 1070 and 1080 or thereabouts (cf. Naudou 1968, 172), and may be found in four editions of the Tibetan canon: *C* 217b1–350a7; *D* (3862) 220b1–348a7; *N* (3254) 266a5–415a2; *P* [98] (5263) 264b8–411b1. There is also a translation of the stanzas *(kārikās)* alone, done by the same team: *C* 198a1–216a7; *D* (3861) 201b1–219a7; *N* (3253) 246b1–266a5; *P* [98] (5262) 245a2–264b8; and finally, a second translation of the *kārikās* alone, by Nag tsho Tshul khrims rgyal ba and Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita, found in only two editions of the canon: *N* (3252) 227a3–246b1; *P* [98] (5261) 225b7–245a2. For our English translation Geshé Wangchen and I used the edition of the Tibetan provided by La Vallée Poussin, which was based on a comparison of *P* and *N*. He also utilized a noncanonical edition provided for him by Stcherbatsky, as well as Jayānanda's *Madhyamakāvatāraṭika* (*P* 5271) (see Tauscher 1983, 293). I have referred to the partial translations of the *kārikās* and commentary listed in the bibliography under "Primary Sources, *MA*."

HOMAGE TO PRINCE MAÑJUŚRĪ
THE BODHISATTVA OF WISDOM

THE FIRST STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE JOYOUS *(PRAMUDITĀ)*

(1) Both the śrāvakas and the middling buddhas[1] are produced from the [teachings of the] most excellent sage *(munīndra),* and every buddha is himself born from a bodhisattva. The generative causes of the sons of the conquerors (or bodhisattvas) are the thought of compassion, non-dualistic knowledge,[2] and the thought of awakening.

(2) Before all else I praise compassion; for this sympathy is regarded as the seed of the precious harvest [which is] the conquerors, as the water that nourishes [this crop], and as the ripening process that yields mature fruit after some time.

(3) I bow down to this compassion[3] arising for all living beings who have first generated self-infatuation through the thought "I," and then attachment to objects through the thought "This is mine," so that like a paddlewheel they wander round and round devoid of self-determination.[4]

(4–5) The sons of the conquerors see these creatures as fluctuating and empty of intrinsic being like the reflection of the moon in shimmering water. The first [stage in generation of the thought of awakening] is dominated by compassion directed toward the liberation of all living beings, and fixed in happiness that grows[5] from the vow of universal good.[6] Because he has obtained [the thought of awakening], from this moment on he is designated by the title *bodhisattva.*

(6)[7] He is born into the family of the tathāgatas[8] and rids himself completely of the three bonds;[9] the bodhisattva fosters a sublime joy, and is capable of shaking[10] a hundred world systems.

(7) Mounting from stage to stage he will make his ascent, [but even] at this time[11] he will have eradicated the paths leading to rebirth in bad migrations.[12] For him [any possibility of] life as a common man is now absolutely exhausted, and he is assigned the same [status] as a saint of the eighth rank.[13]

(8)[14] Even [a bodhisattva] who has reached no further than this first [stage in the] vision of the thought of perfect awakening excels by the force of his merit, and triumphs over both the pratyekabuddhas and the [śrāvakas] born from the words of the most excellent sage; and at the stage [called] "Far Advanced" *(Dūraṅgamā)*, he will surpass them in intelligence *(dhī)* as well.

(9) During this time generosity predominates in [the bodhisattva] as the initial cause of perfect awakening; and because this generosity insures devotion even in giving one's own flesh, so it furnishes an inferential sign of [qualities] that can not become manifest [at this stage].[15]

(10) All living beings yearn for comfort, but men are not even comfortable without some object of pleasure.[16] The sage established generosity at the head [of the path] since he understood how objects of pleasure originate from it.

(11) The objects of pleasure possessed by living beings with little compassion, those who are filled with hostility and totally devoted to selfish purposes, have themselves arisen from generosity, which causes the alleviation of all suffering.

(12) Furthermore, before long, on some occasion when they are practicing generosity such men will meet with a saint;[17] after this the stream of existence will be severed and they will attain [true] peace, which has [generosity] for its cause.

(13) Those who carry in their hearts the resolution to act for the benefit of all living beings obtain, through [the practice of] generosity, immediate happiness. Therefore these words on generosity are essential, because they are designed for compassionate as well as uncompassionate people.

(14) Even the happiness that comes from entering into the peace [of nirvāṇa][18] is unlike that happiness experienced by a son of the conquerors when he thinks about hearing the word *give.* What can be said of [the joy that arises] from abandoning all [inner and outer possessions]?[19]

(15) Through his pain in donating [the flesh] cut from his own body [the bodhisattva] knows firsthand of the agony endured by others in hell and the various [bad migrations], and he straightaway puts forth a supreme effort that these sufferings may be eradicated.

(16) That act of generosity which is empty of giver, giving, and recipient is called a supramundane perfection; and that which is attached to [concepts of] these three is taught as a mundane perfection.[20]

(17) In this way the joy abiding in the heart of the son of the conquerors infuses its pure receptacle with a beautifully radiant light, and like the precious liquid crystal of the moon, it conquers and dispels the blackest darkness.[21]

So ends the first [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Joyous" *(Pramuditā)*, according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE SECOND STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE IMMACULATE *(VIMALĀ)*

(1) [The bodhisattva] possesses the pure qualities of most perfect morality and therefore, even while dreaming, he renounces any defilement which would violate his moral behavior. From purification of physical, verbal, and mental acts he consolidates the ten paths of pure conduct.[1]

(2) With his entry into [the second stage] this tenfold path of virtue is brought to extreme purity. Like the autumn moon he is himself always pure, and through following these [ten paths] he is made beautiful with the radiant light of peace.[2]

(3) If, however, he were to view [any aspect of] this pure morality as intrinsically existent, then it would no longer be "pure" morality. Therefore he remains totally aloof from the influence of dualistic ideas concerning any of the three [supports].[3]

(4) For a person whose morality is deficient, the goods resulting from charity may appear even in a bad migration; but when the bulk of them has been spent along with any other which they produced, there will be no more such goods in the future.

(5) When [a person] lives with independence and under agreeable circumstances and still neglects to take firm hold of himself, then he will tumble into the abyss and be delivered over to the power of others; and once this has happened, who will lift him up?[4]

(6) Because of this, the conqueror gave instruction in moral conduct just after teaching about generosity. [All] good qualities thrive in the soil of morality, and the enjoyment of its fruits never ceases.

(7) For common men, for [śrāvakas] born from the words [of a buddha], for the individual[5] [awakening] of pratyekabuddhas, and for the sons of the conquerors, the essential cause of temporary happiness as well as incomparable bliss is none other than morality.[6]

(8) Just as in the case of the ocean with respect to a corpse,[7] or as it is

with prosperity in the face of misfortune—so a mighty one *(mahātman)* governed by the force of morality is unwilling to live with any transgression.

(9) When there is any [belief in an] objective support associated with these three—he who abstains, the act of abstention, and the object of that act—then such morality is called a mundane perfection; but that which is empty of attachment to the three of them is referred to as a supramundane perfection.[8]

(10) Issuing forth from that moon which is the son of the conquerors, this immaculate [stage] is not worldly, and yet it is the glory of the world. Stainless and pure as light from the autumn moon, it dispels the burning heat that torments the heart of every living being.[9]

So ends the second [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Immaculate" *(Vimalā),* according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE THIRD STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE LUMINOUS *(PRABHĀKARĪ)*

(1) This third stage is [called] "The Luminous" because here appears the light of the fire which burns away without remainder its fuel of the objects of knowledge.[1] At this time, within the son of the tathāgata there arises a brilliance the color of polished brass, like the sun.

(2) If someone angered without provocation should gradually, measure by measure, cut away the flesh and bone from the bodhisattva's body, his patience with the person doing the cutting would grow to an extreme.[2]

(3) Even the things associated with such an act of mutilation—that which [is being cut], he who [is cutting], and the time [of the event]—are seen as [mere] reflections by a bodhisattva who directly perceives the absence of a self *(nairātmya).* On this account, he is patient.[3]

(4) If the one who has been injured bears a grudge against the [injurer], does this grudge against him annul that [act of violence] which has already been accomplished? [No, it does not, and] therefore malice is not only of no advantage in this world, but it creates an obstacle to [favorable birth in] the next world as well.

(5) The fruit of previous evil deeds is itself called the destroyer [of future evil deeds]. Why should it be transformed into the seed of misery through anger and injury against another?[4]

(6) Anger directed against a son of the conquerors destroys in a single moment merit accumulated through generosity and morality practiced over the course of eons. Therefore there is no other sin greater than impatience.

(7) Impatience creates an ugly appearance, it leads to association with the ignoble, it steals the discrimination that distinguishes between right and wrong behavior, and before long it casts the offender into a bad migration. Patience engenders qualities the opposite of those [faults] just mentioned.

(8) Patience beautifies and leads to association with noble people, it is the knowledge involved in distinguishing between right and wrong conduct. Moreover, it brings about the disintegration of sin, and birth as a god or a man.

(9) When the common man and the son of the conquerors have understood the faults of anger and the good qualities of patience, and so abandoned impatience, they ought to practice at once and forever patience which is praised by the saints.

(10) Even as applied toward the awakening of a perfect buddha, when [patience is associated with] attachment to reified concepts concerning the existence of the three supports, it remains a mundane perfection. That [patience] which is devoid of any support was taught by the buddha as a supramundane perfection.

(11) At this stage the son of the conquerors experiences, along with his practice of meditation *(dhyāna)* and higher mental faculties,[5] the complete exhaustion of craving and hostility. He is also capable at any time of vanquishing the passionate craving of the world.

(12) The *sugatas*[6] commonly recommend these three principles—generosity, [morality, and patience]—to laypeople. These same principles constitute the provision of merit, and are the cause of the buddha's body of form.[7]

(13) When it has completely dispelled the darkness of the son of the conquerors within whom it resides, [the thought of awakening associated with] this luminous [stage] brings with it a longing for total victory over the darkness of all living beings. At this stage, even though he has become extremely zealous *(tikṣṇa),* [the bodhisattva] is never subject to anger.

So ends the third [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Luminous" *(Prabhākarī),* according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE FOURTH STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE RADIANT *(ARCIṢMATI)*

(1) All good qualities follow after energy *(vīrya)*.[1] Energy is a cause for both of the two types of provisions: merit and discernment.[2] The stage where it is kindled is the fourth, called "The Radiant."

(2) At this stage, within the son of the *sugatas*, from intense meditative cultivation *(bhāvana)* of the ancillaries to perfect awakening *(samyak-sambodhipakṣas)*, a brilliance is produced which is superior to the shining of brass, and any [reified concepts] associated with the philosophical view of a subjective self are completely eradicated.[3]

So ends the fourth [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Radiant" *(Arciṣmati)*, according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE FIFTH STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE UNCONQUERABLE *(SUDURJAYĀ)*

(1) At the stage called "The Unconquerable,"[1] the mighty one cannot be subdued even by all the forces of Māra.[2] [Perfection of] meditation predominates, and [the bodhisattva] gains extreme skill in comprehension of the profound intrinsic nature of the [four] truths of the noble-minded.

So ends the fifth [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Unconquerable" *(Sudurjayā)*, according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE SIXTH STAGE
IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE DIRECTLY FACING *(ABHIMŪKHĪ)*

[Introduction]

(1) [At the stage called] "The Directly Facing,"[1] fixed in balanced concentration *(samādhi)* and directly facing the Dharma of a perfect buddha, [the bodhisattva] who perceives the nature of conditionality *(idampratyayatā)*[2] abides in perfect wisdom and thereby attains cessation.[3]

(2) Just as an entire group of blind men is easily conducted to its destination by a single person gifted with sight, so in this case also [perfect wisdom] goes on to the [stage of] the conquerors, taking along with it the [previous five] qualities that are without the eye of discrimination.[4]

(3) The approach to be explained here is established in accordance with the original way of the noble Nāgārjuna, because he comprehended the profound nature of things through reason as well as through scripture.[5]

(4)[6] Even as a common man one may hear about emptiness and experience an inward joy again and again—his eyes moistened with tears born from that joy, and the hair on his body standing erect.

(5)[7] The seed of a perfect buddha's discrimination lies within such a person. This person is a proper vessel for teachings on reality, it is to him that the truth of the highest meaning is to be taught, and he possesses the qualities which must accompany that [instruction].

(6)[8] Always he lives morally, gives offerings, practices compassion, and fosters patience. He applies the merit from these [virtues] toward his awakening for the liberation of all living beings.

(7) He is devoted to the perfect bodhisattvas. A person who is expert in this profound and vast way, who has by degrees obtained the stage called "The Joyous," and who is intent on this [stage]—he alone should attend to this path.[9]

[The non-origination of all things (*sarvadharmānutpāda*)]

(8a–b)[10] The same [entity] does not arise from [itself], and how can it arise from another? Neither does it arise from both [itself and another], and what exists without any cause?

[Spontaneous production (*svata utpāda*): The first alternative]

(8c–d) It would be entirely pointless for an [entity] to arise from itself, and it is moreover unreasonable to suppose that something already produced might be produced all over again.[11]

(9) If one presumes that an entity already produced is produced all over again, then either the production of the sprout, for example, would not occur in the context of everyday experience,[12] or else the seed would reproduce until the end of all existence.[13] How could such an entity ever perish?[14]

(10) According to you [who maintain this first alternative], there is no difference between the seed as generative cause and the sprout as effect, in terms of their shape, color, flavor, efficacy,[15] or ripening. And if [the seed] abandons its former intrinsic nature and assumes an essence different from that, then in this case how would it possess any reality at all?[16]

(11) If, as you maintain, the seed associated with a particular sprout is not different from that sprout, then either that which is termed the *sprout*, like the seed, would never be perceived,[17] or the seed would look just like the sprout because the two would be identical. It follows that this [thesis] is unacceptable.

(12)[18] Insofar as its effect is visible only when the cause has disappeared, the identity of the two is also unacceptable even in the context of everyday experience. Therefore, this conception of an entity arising out of itself is unreasonable both in terms of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] and from the perspective of everyday experience.[19]

(13) If one maintains this notion of self-production, then it follows that cause (*janaka*) and effect (*janya*), or agent (*kartṛ*) and action (*karma*) would [by the same criterion] be identical. They are obviously not identical, however, and therefore self-production is not an acceptable thesis, for it entails these erroneous consequences which have been explained in even greater detail [in the *Madhyamakaśāstra*].

[Production from another (*parata utpāda*): The second alternative][20]

(14)[21] If one entity arises in dependence on another,[22] then pitch darkness can arise from a flame. In fact, [if this were the case, then] anything could arise from anything, because it is not simply [the cause] which is different from [its effect]—all non-causes as well are different [from that effect].[23]

(15)[24] [*Objection*] That which is capable of being produced is thereby designated as the effect, and that which is capable of engendering it—even though it is different [from this effect]—is the cause. [And furthermore, because] a thing is produced from [some other thing] which belongs to the same continuum and which is itself a producer, therefore it is not the case that a rice sprout grows from a barley seed, for example.[25]

(16) [*Response*] You do not assume that a barley seed, or a seed of the Kesara, the Kiṁśuka, or any other flower seed produces a rice sprout, because they do not possess the capability to do so, because they are not included in the same continuum [with the rice sprout], and because they are not similar to it. In just the same way, because of the fact that it is different [from the sprout], the grain of rice lacks [the characteristic features of that sprout].[26]

(17)[27] Granted that the sprout and the seed do not exist simultaneously, how then can the seed be different [from the sprout] when there is [no existing sprout] for it to be contrasted with? It follows that [according to your own analysis] the sprout cannot be produced from the seed. This thesis of production from another must then be rejected.[28]

(18) One may assert that just as we can see that the ascent and descent of the two ends of a scale's balance occur simultaneously, in much the same way the production of an effect and the destruction of its cause [can also be said to occur simultaneously].[29] However, even if [the movements of a scale's balance] are simultaneous, in the case [of causality] there is no such simultaneity. The example is consequently inappropriate.

(19)[30] [*Objection*] What is being produced is "turned toward" production and does not yet exist, while what is being destroyed is "turned toward" destruction although it still does exist. [*Response*] How is this similar to the example of the scale?[31] And furthermore, this sort of production in the absence of an agent is entirely illogical.[32]

(20) If there is a difference between visual cognition and its own simultaneously existing generators—the eye, the perception, and the other coappearing factors, and [visual cognition itself already] exists, then what is the necessity for its [repeated] arising? And if you say that it does not already exist, then the fault entailed by this [thesis] has been previously explained above.[33]

(21) Let us suppose that the producer is a cause that produces an effect different [from itself]. In this case, are we to believe that it produces something which exists, which does not exist, which both exists and does not exist, or which neither exists nor does not exist? If

[the effect already] exists, then what need is there for a producer? If it does not exist, then what could a producer do to it?[34] And in either of the last two cases the same question arises.[35]

[Exposition of the two truths]

(22) [*Objection*] Everyday experience, which is grounded in immediate perception, is considered to be authoritative, therefore what is to be accomplished here by these demands for reason? Furthermore, any normal person knows that one thing is produced from another. Production from another is taken for granted as a matter of course—what possible necessity is there for reason?[36]

(23)[37] [*Response*] All entities bear a dual nature, which corresponds to the entity as apprehended through either a correct or an incorrect perception. The object revealed through correct perception is real [in the highest, soteriological sense], while that revealed through incorrect perception is referred to as "the truth of the screen."[38]

(24) Incorrect perception is classified according to two categories: first, that which derives from an unimpaired faculty; and second, that which derives from a defective faculty. The understanding of those people equipped with defective faculties is considered erroneous in relation to the understanding of one whose faculties are in good order.[39]

(25)[40] Understanding based on apprehension by any of the six unimpaired faculties is true by the standard of everyday experience, while any remaining reified concepts *(vikalpas)* are false according to this same criterion.[41]

(26) [For example,] the concepts of non-Buddhists *(tīrthikas),* who are overcome with the sleep of spiritual ignorance—as for instance [their belief in] a self—and other concepts which arise in conjunction with magic, mirages, and so on: [Each of these is grounded in an object which is] nonexistent even from the perspective of everyday experience.[42]

(27)[43] Just as the apprehension of an eye afflicted with ophthalmia does not invalidate any knowledge derived from a healthy eye, so the understanding of those from whom stainless knowledge is concealed does not invalidate that understanding which is itself without stain.[44]

(28)[45] Delusion is a screen *(saṁvṛti)* precisely because it obstructs [awareness of the] intrinsic nature[46] [of all things], and on its account, what is merely fabricated appears to be real. The sage declared that this is the truth of the screen, and that entity which is [pure] fabrication is a [mere] screen.[47]

(29)[48] Under the influence of ophthalmia one forms a false image of hairs and so forth, while an unimpaired eye spontaneously perceives what is real. [The distinction between the two truths] must be understood in an analogous fashion.[49]

(30) If everyday experience were authoritative, then common people would perceive the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. What necessity would there be for those others, the saints? And what would be accomplished by following their path? It is unreasonable for such foolishness to be accepted as entirely authoritative.

(31) Everyday experience is not authoritative in every respect, and therefore it does not contradict the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. However, the objects encountered in everyday experience are taken for granted on the consensus of that experience, and any attempt to negate them may be effectively countered by relying on the testimony of just that everyday experience.[50]

(32) Worldly people merely sow the seed, and yet they claim, "I produced that boy," or they imagine, "That tree was planted [by me]." Therefore production from another is not viable even by the standards of mundane experience.[51]

(33) The seed is not destroyed at the time when the sprout [is produced], because the sprout is not different from the seed; and yet, because the two are not identical, so it may not be asserted that the seed exists at the time when the sprout [is produced].[52]

(34) If [an entity exists] in dependence on an intrinsic distinguishing characteristic, then through negation of that [distinguishing characteristic] the entity would be destroyed, and emptiness would be the cause of its destruction. This is not the case, however, because entities do not [intrinsically] exist.[53]

(35) When the entities [taken for granted in the context of everyday experience] are examined, they are found to have no intrinsic distinguishing characteristic other than the mark of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. Therefore the conventional truth of everyday experience is not to be critically examined.[54]

(36) "Self-production" and "production from another" [have been demonstrated as] untenable when dealing with the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning], and according to the same reasoning these [two alternatives] are untenable for conventional purposes as well. Through what sort of proof will you defend your [concept of] production?

[The nature of the empirical world as expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]

(37–38) It is no secret that empty entities like reflections and so forth depend on a collocation [of causes and conditions], and that a cognition may be produced in the form of an image of such an empty reflection, for example. All entities are, in a similar fashion, not only empty [as effects], but they are also produced out of empty [causes].[55] According to the two truths, [entities possess] no intrinsic being, and therefore they are not permanent, nor are they subject to annihilation.[56]

(39) No [action] is terminated through its intrinsic nature, and consequently one must understand that even without any repository for its efficacy, and despite the lapse of a considerable period of time following termination of the action, the fruit [of that action] will materialize somewhere.[57]

(40) Even though he has awakened, a foolish person may remember the objects apprehended during his dream and become attached to them. So it is that the result may materialize out of an action that has already terminated and that had no intrinsic being [in the first place].[58]

(41) And just as the object perceived by [an eye] infected with ophthalmia is an image of drifting hair and not an image of some other entity—though any other would be equally unreal; so it must be understood that after the ripening of [a given action] there will be no further ripening.[59]

(42) It follows that although a bad action has an unfavorable consequence and a favorable consequence is seen to be associated with a good action, a person will find liberation [only] when his mind is free from [reified concepts concerning] what is favorable and unfavorable. [Furthermore, speculative] thought concerning action and its consequences has been expressly condemned [by the buddha].[60]

(43)[61] "Repository [consciousness] exists"; "The person exists"; "Only the psychophysical aggregates exist"; "Only the bases of consciousness exist":[62] Teachings such as these are given out of consideration for those who do not understand the more profound meaning [of teachings about emptiness].[63]

(44)[64] Even though the buddha held no philosophical view of a real, substantial self, nevertheless he used the expressions "I" and "mine" while teaching. Similarly, even though entities are devoid of intrinsic being, still he taught in a nondefinitive sense *(neyārtha)* that they all do exist.[65]

[Refutation of consciousness as an ultimate truth
Cognition in the absence of an external object]

(45)[66] [*The Yogācārin asserts*] Where no object exists, no subject can be found, and therefore the bodhisattva understands that the triple world is merely mind. Relying on wisdom, he further realizes that reality itself is mind alone.

(46)[67] Just as waves stirred by the breeze rise up from a vast ocean, so mind alone becomes manifest through its own potentiality, from the seed of all [things]. This is referred to as "repository [consciousness]."[68]

(47)[69] "Dependent form" *(paratantrarūpa)* acts as the foundation of any designated existent entity *(prajñāptisadvastu)* [in the following ways]: (1) It appears even in the absence of any apprehended external object; (2) it actually exists; and (3) its intrinsic nature is not within the range of conceptual diffusion.[70]

(48)[71] [*The Prāsaṅgika responds*] Is there anywhere such a thing as thought in the absence of an external object? If you intend to use the example of a dream, then consider the following: From our perspective, even in a dream there is no thought [in the absence of an object],[72] and therefore your example is unacceptable.[73]

(49)[74] If the existence of mind [in the dream is to be proven] through reference to memory of the dream during waking hours, then the existence of the external object [in the dream is also established] by the same criterion; for just as you remember "I saw," so there is also a memory of the external object [seen].[75]

(50)[76] You may suppose that during sleep visual cognition is not possible, and therefore only mental cognition is present in the absence of [any external object]. According to this supposition, in a dream [the dreamer] attributes externality to this [mental cognition], and here in waking life [the process of perception is to be understood] in an analogous fashion.

(51)[77] [On the contrary, we Prāsaṅgikas maintain the following] Just as according to you no external object is produced in a dream, so [according to us] the mental [cognition] as well is not produced: The eye, the visual object, and the thought produced from them are all three false.[78]

(52) The remaining triads—the auditory, [olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental][79]—are also not produced. Waking life is in this respect similar to a dream. All things are false, there is no thought [in the absence of an objective referent], and deprived of a sphere of operations sense organs as well do not [ultimately] exist.[80]

(53) He who wakes from the sleep of spiritual ignorance is as one awakening from a dream. So long as he does not awaken, the triad remains, but when he wakes it no longer exists.

(54) Both the hair perceived under the influence of ophthalmia and the cognition associated with the infected sense organ are real, relative to that cognition. However, for one who clearly sees the object, the two of them are fictitious.[81]

(55) If cognition were to exist in the absence of any object of knowledge, then when the eye was directed toward the place where the hairs

[were seen], even a person not afflicted with ophthalmia should perceive them. This is not what actually happens, though, and therefore this [thesis] is untenable.[82]

[Cognition as the result of "ripened potentiality"]

(56) It has been suggested that cognition of the hair does not arise [in those afflicted with ophthalmia] because the potentiality for cognition has not ripened in these particular individuals. In this case, the absence [of the hair] is not due to lack of an entity to serve as the object of knowledge.[83] [We Prāsaṅgikas respond as follows] There is no such thing as potentiality, and this [thesis] is therefore not tenable.

(57) There is no possibility of potentiality for [an object which has already] been produced, and neither can there be any potentiality for an unproduced entity.[84] The base of a qualification does not exist in the absence of that qualification, for if this were the case, it would follow that [the potentiality] would exist even for the son of a barren woman.[85]

(58) One might hope to designate this [potentiality as determined] by the imminence [of the cognition; however, this too must be rejected]. In the absence of potentiality, [cognition] is no longer imminent.[86] "That which exists in dependence on a reciprocal object does not [intrinsically] exist"—thus the saints have declared.[87]

(59) If [a cognition] arises from the ripened potentiality of [another cognition] that has terminated, then one [cognition] would indeed arise from the potentiality of a different [cognition].[88] However, the moments of the continuum *(saṁtāninaḥ)* would be different from one another, and consequently anything could arise from anything else.

(60) One may wish to suggest that although the moments of a continuum are different, the continuum [in which they subsist] is itself undifferentiated, and therefore the [above-mentioned] objection is irrelevant. This remains to be proven, for the occasion of such an undifferentiated continuum is not amenable to reason.

(61) The [two individuals named][89] Maitreya and Upagupta are different people, and therefore their constituent factors are not included in the same continuum. It would be unreasonable [to propose that things] which differ in terms of [their respective] intrinsic distinguishing characteristics could be included in the same continuum.

(62) [*The Yogācārin asserts*] The production of visual cognition occurs complete and without delay from its own [ripened] potentiality. What is [commonly] understood to be the physical organ of the eye is actually just this potentiality, which is the source of its own cognition.[90]

(63) Normally, a person imagines that [the cognition of color] arises from the sense organ. He does not understand that the appearance of

blue, for example, arises from its own seed without any externally apprehended object, and on this account he assumes that such an object is present.[91]

(64) [However, this is not the case.] As in a dream the mental image of a discrete objective form arises from its own ripened potentiality in the absence of any such [actual form], so it is here in waking life also—mind exists in the absence of any external object.

(65) [*The Prāsaṅgika responds*] Since in a dream the mental cognition appearing as blue, for example, arises in the absence of an eye, then why is [such a mental cognition] not similarly produced from its own seed here [in waking life as well] to a blind man without any visual organ?

(66) According to you, in the dream [of a blind man] there is ripened potentiality for the sixth [sense of mental cognition], while in waking life there is none. If this is so, then why would it be unreasonable to suppose that in the same way [the blind man possesses] no ripened potentiality for the sixth [sense] here [in waking life], he also has no such [potentiality] during the dream?

(67) The absence of eyes [in a blind man] furnishes no cause [for vision in waking life]. Similarly, sleep also cannot be posited as a cause [for vision] in the dream.[92] It follows that in a dream as well as in [waking life], the [perceived] object and the eye provide [coefficient] causes for conceptualization of a fictitious entity.

[The unreality of both cognition and its object]

(68) An opponent is refuted by perceiving that each and every response he offers is nothing but an unsubstantiated thesis.[93] The buddhas did not teach that any entity whatsoever [ultimately] exists.[94]

(69) The meditator *(yogin)* who follows his teacher's instructions sees the surrounding area to be filled with skeletons.[95] In this case it is obvious that all three [factors of sensation][96] are unproduced, because this is an exercise in artificial mentation.

(70) According to our opponent, even these impure mental [visualizations] are just like the [conventional] objects of sense perception. If this were so, then anyone else [besides the meditator] who looked at the place where they appear should perceive the skeletons. They are fictitious, however, and are not [perceived by anyone other than the meditator].

(71) [The mechanism involved when] hungry ghosts experience cognition of a river flowing with pus is identical to that of the visual organ afflicted with ophthalmia.[97] Our meaning here must be understood as follows: Just as there is no object of knowledge, so there is no cognition.[98]

[Refutation of a noncognized entity (reflexive awareness) as the ultimate truth]

(72) If this "dependent entity"[99] exists in the absence of both subject and object, then who is aware of its existence? It would be unacceptable to assert that it exists unapprehended.[100]

(73) It is not proven that [a cognition] is aware of itself. Nor can this be proven by using the subsequent memory [of a previous event as evidence],[101] for in this case the thesis intended to substantiate your claim itself embodies an unproven premise, and therefore it cannot be admitted [as valid proof].[102]

(74) Even if [the notion of] reflexive awareness is admitted, it would still be illogical to assert that a memory *(smṛtijñāna)* constitutes remembrance [of an actual experience]. In fact, it would be entirely different from [that previous experience], just as much as if it had been produced in a continuum that did not include any cognition [of that earlier experience]. This argument [based on the difference between the two] effectively counters any particular attempt [to explain memory through recourse to the notion of reflexive awareness].[103]

(75) On the other hand, according to [the Prāsaṅgika], a memory is no different from [the previous awareness involved in] experience of the object, and therefore one's memory occurs in the form "I saw [a particular object]." This is the position taken for granted in everyday experience.[104]

(76) Therefore, without [this notion of] reflexive awareness who (or what) will apprehend your dependent [form]? The actor, the object [of the action], and the action are not identical, and for this reason it is illogical to maintain that [a cognition] apprehends itself.[105]

(77) However, if the entity which is [a manifestation of this] dependent form *(paratantrarūpavastu)* exists without ever having been produced or cognized, then why should our opponent insist that [belief in] the existence of the son of a barren woman is irrational? What harm could the son of a barren woman inflict on him [that he has not already suffered through belief in his concept of dependent form]?

(78) And in the event that this dependent [form] in no way whatsoever exists, then what will function as the cause for the screen [of conventional truth]? All the ordered structure of everyday experience is laid waste by this clinging to a real substance inherent in our opponents' philosophical views.[106]

[The true meaning of teachings on "mind alone"]

(79)[107] There is no means of finding peace for those walking outside the path trodden by the master Nāgārjuna. Such people have strayed from the truth of the screen and from the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning], and on account of this they will never be free.

(80)[108] Conventional truth is the means, the truth of the highest meaning is the goal, and one who does not appreciate the distinction between these two treads a wrong path through his reified concepts.[109]

(81) We [Mādhyamikas] do not have the same attitude toward our [concept of] the screen as you [Yogācārins] have toward your [concept of] dependent being *(paratantrabhāva).* With reference to the nature of everyday experience, we say: "Even though things do not exist, they exist"—and this is done for a specific purpose.[110]

(82) [The things of the world] do not exist for the saints who have abandoned the psychophysical aggregates and found peace. If, in a similar manner, they did not exist in the context of everyday experience, then we would not maintain that they do—even in this qualified sense.[111]

(83) If everyday experience poses no threat to you, then you may persist in this denial of the evidence provided by such experience. Quarrel with the evidence of everyday experience, and afterward we will rely on the winner.

(84) At [the stage called] "The Directly Facing," the bodhisattva who is turned toward [the truth of the highest meaning] realizes that "the triple world is mind alone."[112] [This teaching] is intended to refute [philosophical views of the conventional] agent as an eternal self by demonstrating that the agent is mind alone.[113]

(85) Like a lightning bolt shattering the lofty mountain peak of the outsiders, the omniscient one spoke these words from the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* with the aim of increasing the wisdom of the wise.

(86) Each one of the non-Buddhist philosophers[114] speaks in his own texts about [the agent as] a "person" *(pudgala),* or as some other [permanent entity]. The conqueror did not agree with these [definitions of] the agent, and so he taught that the agent within the context of everyday affairs is "mind alone."[115]

(87) Just as "he [whose knowledge of] reality is expansive" is referred to as "buddha," so the [*Laṅkāvatāra*]*sūtra* substitutes "mind alone" for [the full expression] "mind alone is preeminent in the context of everyday experience." The meaning of this sūtra is not to be understood as a denial of form *(rūpa).*[116]

(88)[117] If he intended to deny [the existence of] form when he said that [the triple world] is mind alone, then why would the *mahātman* proceed to state, in the same sūtra, that mind alone is produced from delusion *(moha)* and volitional action?[118]

(89)[119] Mind alone fabricates all the diversity of sentient and insentient worlds. [The buddha] declared that the entire universe is produced from volitional action, but there can be no such action without mind.[120]

(90) Even though form does indeed exist, it does not, like mind, func-

tion as "agent." Therefore, in denying the existence of any other agent besides mind, there is no implied denial of form.[121]

(91) Within the context of everyday reality *(laukikatattva)* all five psychophysical aggregates taken for granted by everyday experience do exist, but they do not appear to the meditator who is engaged in developing knowledge of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning].

(92) If form does not exist, then do not hold to the existence of mind; and if mind exists, then do not hold to the nonexistence of form. The buddha unqualifiedly rejected both of them[122] in the scriptures on perfect wisdom; and in the Abhidharma literature he affirmed them both.

(93) You destroy the hierarchy of the two truths, and even then this [idea of a] real substance (i.e., consciousness without any object) will not be established, for it has been refuted [on a number of other grounds]. It would be better to understand this hierarchy [of the two truths] as follows: In the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] no entity is ever produced, but they do arise within the context of everyday experience.

(94) In a certain sūtra it is taught that there is no external image *(bahyābhāsa)* and that mind [alone appears in the form of] a diversity of images. This is intended to function as a denial of form only for those who are extremely attached to form, and [such teachings are] nondefinitive *(neyārtha)*.

(95) The master set forth this teaching in a nondefinitive sense, and it is only reasonable to interpret it in this way. Futhermore, it is clear on the basis of this passage that other sūtras of this type are also of nondefinitive meaning.[123]

(96) The buddhas have taught that refutation of the knower *(jñātṛ)* may easily be accomplished once the object of knowledge *(jñeya)* has been dispensed with. For this reason they began by refuting the object of knowledge.[124]

(97) One must therefore proceed according to these guidelines when interpreting doctrinal passages [dealing with the concept of "mind alone"]. Sūtras which deal with [teachings on] emptiness are to be understood in a definitive sense, while those that take up the subject of something other than the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] are nondefinitive, and they must be interpreted through critical reflection.

[The combination of self-production and production from another: The third alternative]

(98) Production from both is also patently unreasonable, because the faults already explained also accrue to this [thesis]. Neither [self-] pro-

duction nor production from [another] has been proven, and this [third alternative] is unacceptable both from the perspective of the truth [of the highest meaning] and within the context of everyday experience.

[Production unassociated with any causal factor: The fourth alternative]

(99) If production is believed to take place only in the absence of a cause, then it follows that anything could be produced anywhere at any time, and hundreds of thousands of seeds sown by common people for the purpose of raising crops would result in no harvest whatsoever.[125]

(100)[126] If the world were devoid of any cause [for its existence], then like the color or scent of a lotus growing in midair, surely it would not be apprehended as existent. On the contrary, the world is apprehended in all its rich variety, and therefore it must be acknowledged that exactly as is the case with our own cognition [of the world], the world is itself [produced] from causes.

(101) The primary material elements are not characterized by any "self" like the one that serves as the object of your [misleading] cognition; and when one's mind is enveloped with an impenetrable darkness with respect to everyday experience in this life, how can he accurately comprehend the next life?[127]

(102) Negation of the possibility of an afterlife implies the presence of a mistaken belief in the self as a quality of intrinsic being, which is then attributed to the object of knowledge.[128] This is so because, in this case, [belief in the ultimate reality of the material elements of] the body and belief [in the self as a quality of intrinsic being] both derive from the same source.[129]

(103)[130] We have by now accounted for the way in which the material elements do not exist, insofar as the preceding discussion constitutes a general refutation of production—whether it is self-production, production from another, production from both or from neither. It is clear that the elements do not exist, even though they were not specifically mentioned.

[Summary of the refutation of intrinsic being]

(104)[131] Entities are devoid of intrinsic being because there is no production either from self, from another, from both, or in the absence of any cause. Yet these objects assume a false appearance, because the world is covered over with the fog of a profound delusion.[132]

(105)[133] Under the influence of ophthalmia one mistakenly perceives hair, a double moon, the eyes on a peacock's tail, or flies. In a similar way, when the mind has fallen under the influence of the problem of delusion, a naive person develops reified concepts in association with all manner of composite things.

(106) Without a doubt, naive people ought to be aware that volitional action finds its source in delusion, so that when delusion is eliminated, such action does not take place. The wise comprehend emptiness and are liberated, for they have burned away this thick cloud of delusion with the sun of their noble minds.[134]

(107) [*Objection*] If in the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] things did not exist, then like the son of a barren woman they would be nonexistent conventionally as well. [They do exist conventionally, however, and] therefore they must exist by virtue of their intrinsic being *(svabhāvena)*.

(108) [*Response*] This objection of yours should be raised, for now, with reference to those who are afflicted with ophthalmia, since the objects like hair which appear to such people are [conventionally] unproduced. After [this phenomenon has been properly explained], voice your objection with reference to those who are afflicted with the ophthalmia of spiritual ignorance.[135]

(109) One perceives dreams, fairy cities, mirages of water, magic, reflected images, and so forth, which are unproduced, and yet according to our opponent it is unreasonable that such things could appear as they do, since [on his view] they are no different from that which does not exist [in any sense whatsoever] (as, e.g., the son of a barren woman).[136]

(110) [According to the Prāsaṅgika, however,] even though [things] are not in reality produced, unlike the son of a barren woman they do serve as objects that are perceived in the context of everyday experience, and on this account, your argument is inconclusive.[137]

(111) The son of a barren woman is not produced in and of itself *(svātmataḥ)* either in the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] or in the context of everyday experience. Likewise, all things are unproduced in and of themselves *(svarūpena)* both in this higher reality and in the world.[138]

(112) Therefore the master declared that all things are from the beginning at peace, devoid of production and, by virtue of their intrinsic nature, completely unentangled in suffering:[139] There is no production.[140]

(113) A jug, for example, does not exist in the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning], and yet it is taken for granted in the context of everyday experience. All entities are alike in this way; therefore one may not conclude that they are equivalent to the son of a barren woman.[141]

(114) Entities are not produced without a cause, and not from causes

like "God," for example, [which are nothing more than reified concepts]. Nor are they produced from out of themselves, nor from another, nor from both [self and other]. They are produced in mutual dependence.

(115) Reified concepts cannot stand up under analysis simply because entities are produced in mutual dependence. The logic of dependent origination rips to shreds the net of philosophical views.

(116) If entities did [intrinsically] exist, then reified concepts would be in order. [However,] upon critical investigation the entity as such proves to be nonexistent, and in the absence of an [intrinsically existent] entity, these reified concepts are inappropriate.[142] There will be no fire in the absence of fuel.

[Refutation of the intrinsically existent person *(pudgalanairātmya)* Introduction]

(117)[143] Common people are tightly bound by these reified concepts, while the meditator who does not produce such ideas obtains liberation. Wise men have declared that analysis[144] results in the termination of reified concepts.

(118) The analysis in the [*Madhyamaka*]*śāstra* is not conducted out of fondness for debate—it teaches about the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] for the purpose of liberation. If in the course of these teachings on reality other philosophical systems are destroyed, this cannot be construed as a fault [of the Mādhyamika].

(119) Attachment to one's own philosophical view and aversion to the view of another is itself evidence of reified thinking. When one sets aside attachment and aversion and analyzes [all views], he will quickly find liberation.

(120)[145] Through insight the meditator realizes that all afflictions and misfortunes are associated with the philosophical view of a real, substantial "I" *(satkāyadṛṣṭi),*[146] and once he has identified the self *(ātman)* as the focal point of this view, he uproots [the reified concept of] self.

(121)[147] The self as conceptualized by non-Buddhist philosophers is eternal, inactive, without qualities, a nonagent, and the partaker [of all objects of knowledge]. The systems of these non-Buddhists are distinguished according to the various characteristics that they have attributed to this [self].

(122) A self like this simply does not exist, for it is no more produced than is the son of a barren woman. Moreover, it makes no sense that it should serve as the basis for clinging to an "I": We do not consider it to exist even from the perspective of the [truth of the] screen.[148]

(123) Our well-known arguments concerning nonproduction con-

trovert every one of the characteristics that these non-Buddhist philosophers teach about in their texts. Not one of them is feasible.

[Refutation of the self as different from the psychophysical aggregates]

(124) Therefore there is no self different from the psychophysical aggregates, for apart from the aggregates it cannot be established. Nor is it considered to be the cognitive basis for clinging to an "I," which is a part of everyday experience. This philosophical view of a self is unreasonable.[149]

(125) Even those who have wandered for eons [spending lifetime after lifetime] as animals do not perceive this eternal, unborn [self], yet we can see that they still cling to an "I." On this account, there is no self different from the aggregates.[150]

[Refutation of the self as identical to the psychophysical aggregates]

(126) Because the self is not established as different from the aggregates, some consider the basis of the philosophical view of a self to be the aggregates themselves, some consider [the basis of] the philosophical view of a self to be a part of the aggregates, and some take it to be only [the single aggregate of] mind.

(127)[151] If the self *is* the psychophysical aggregates, then there would have to be a plurality of selves, since there is a plurality of aggregates.[152] In this case the self would be a [conventionally] real substance, and [cognition] with reference to such a real substance could not be erroneous.[153]

(128)[154] However, at the moment of realizing nirvāṇa, such a self would certainly be annihilated,[155] and prior to [the realization of] nirvāṇa it would be produced and destroyed from moment to moment. It follows that the agent would be destroyed, there would be no retribution for him, and one [self] would therefore partake of [the retribution for] volitional action accomplished by another.[156]

(129) If [our opponent should presume that] this fallacy does not apply, for in reality there is a continuum [in which the separate moments of the self subsist], then [he is referred to] the previous analysis, wherein the fallacies implicit in [this notion of] a continuum have already been explained. Furthermore, it is unreasonable that the psychophysical aggregates or the mind should be the self, because it would be wrong to assert that everyday experience, [which is only the aggregates,] is subject to extinction.[157]

(130) If what our opponent suggests is indeed the case, then it would

follow that at the moment when the meditator realizes the absence of an [ultimately real] self, [all conventionally real] things as well would certainly [be perceived as totally] nonexistent. If in defense of this position we assume that he has abandoned [only the concept of] the eternal self, then in that event the self could not be mind or the psychophysical aggregates.[158]

(131) The meditator who realized the absence of a self [simply as the nonexistence of an eternal self] would not comprehend the reality of form and the other [aggregates as expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. On this account, clinging and the other [afflictions] would still be produced, for they arise through the [mis]apprehension of form, and he would not have comprehended the nature (= emptiness) of form [and the other aggregates].[159]

(132) If [our opponent] considers the self to be the psychophysical aggregates because the master taught that "the aggregates are the self," [then he should be made aware that] this is simply [to be construed as] a refutation of the self as something different from the aggregates. In other sūtras it was taught that the self is *not* form [or any of the other aggregates].[160]

(133) In another sūtra it is stated that the self is neither form *(rūpa)* nor feeling *(vedanā),* nor apperception *(saṁjñā),* nor the prenatal dispositions *(saṁskāras),* nor consciousness *(vijñāna).* Therefore one cannot assert that the sūtra defines the self as [identical to] the psychophysical aggregates.[161]

[Refutation of the self as the composite of all five psychophysical aggregates]

(134) [*Objection*] When [the sūtra] maintains that the self is the aggregates, this is a reference to [the composite of all] the aggregates, and not to the essence of [any individual] aggregate.[162] [*Response*] [The composite] is not the protector, nor the one to be subdued, nor the witness, and therefore the [self] is not the composite.[163]

(135) The self is similar to a carriage, and the quality of being a carriage derives from the assembled composite of its parts. However, in the sūtras it is said that the self is merely dependent on the aggregates, and on this account the self is not to be directly equated with the composite of the aggregates.[164]

[Refutation of the self as equivalent to the body]

(136) If one asserts that [the self] is analogous to the shape *(saṁsthāna)* [of the assembled carriage parts], then the implication is that the self

would simply be "form" *(rūpa),* because only form is associated with shape. The other [aggregates] like mind, for example, could not be equated with the self, since they are not associated with any shape.

(137) It is inherently unreasonable that the appropriator and the appropriated substratum are identical, for if this were the case, then the "object of action"[165] and the "agent" would be identical as well.[166] And if, on the other hand, one imagines that action can take place in the absence of any agent, then [we must take issue with this unwarranted assumption]—this is certainly not the case. There is no action in the absence of an agent.[167]

[Summary of the preceding arguments]

(138) The sage taught that the self is dependent on the six elements: earth, water, fire, wind, consciousness, and space; and on the six faculties *(sparśāyatanas):* vision, and so forth [including conceptualization as the sixth].

(139) Furthermore, he taught that the mind (or thought: *citta*) and its component features *(cittadharmas)* support [the self]. Therefore [the self] is not [the individual elements], nor is it any one of them taken separately, nor is it actually the composite—and for this reason the cognitive basis of clinging to an "I" cannot be [a self defined in any such terms].[168]

(140) [Let us suppose for the moment that] when the absence of a self is understood, [this simply entails] a rejection of this "eternal self." But this [reified concept of an eternally existent self] is not considered to be the basis of the clinging to an "I," and therefore why would the philosophical view of a real, substantial self be uprooted by understanding the absence of a self [in this manner]? Such a proposition would be marvelous indeed!

(141)[169] [It is as if] someone were to see that a serpent had taken up residence in a hole in the wall of his home. He proceeds to assure himself that there is no elephant in the house, and by doing so, he manages not only to dispose of his fear [for the imaginary elephant], but he also rids himself of any apprehension for the serpent! Indeed, our opponent is strikingly naive [if he would hold such a position].

(142)[170] The self does not exist in the psychophysical aggregates, and the aggregates do not exist in the self. If there were any difference [between the self and the aggregates], then such reified concepts would be plausible; but because no such difference exists, these are nothing but reified concepts [with no possible application].[171]

(143)[172] The self is not considered to possess form because the self does not exist, and therefore there can be no question of a genitive relationship. [The genitive applies if] there is a difference [between possessor and possessed] as, for example, [in the statement] "[Devadatta] possesses a cow." Or [it also applies] where there is no difference as, for instance, [in the statement] "[Devadatta] possesses a body *(rūpa).*" The self, however, is neither different from nor identical with form.[173]

(144)[174] The self is not form, nor does the self possess form. The self is not "in" form, and form is not "in" the self. All [five] aggregates are to be understood according to just these four alternatives: [The cumulative total of permutations] is regarded as a composite of the twenty aspects of the philosophical view of a self *(ātmadṛṣṭi).*[175]

(145)[176] These [aspects] are the towering peaks situated on the enormous mountain of the philosophical view of a real, substantial "I." They and the self are shattered and completely destroyed by the lightning bolt of the comprehension of selflessness.

[Refutation of the self as an inexpressible yet real substance]

(146) There are those[177] who consider the person to exist as a real substance, yet they cannot say whether it is identical to or different from [the aggregates], permanent or impermanent, or anything else. Furthermore, they consider it to be an object of knowledge for the sixth (mental) cognition,[178] and as such, the basis for clinging to an "I."[179]

(147) [The difference or identity of] mind with respect to form is not conceived of as inexpressible, and in fact, no existing thing *(vastusat)* is considered inexpressible. It follows that if the self is an established entity, then, like "mind," which is [also] an established entity, [its difference or identity with respect to the psychophysical aggregates] would not be inexpressible.

(148) According to our opponent, a jug is not by nature an established entity precisely because [its difference or identity] with respect to form, for example, is inexpressible. Likewise, the relationship of the self to the psychophysical aggregates is also inexpressible, and therefore one ought not conceive of the self as intrinsically existent.[180]

(149) Once again according to our opponent, consciousness is not considered different from itself, but it is taken to be an entity different from form [and the other aggregates]. These two aspects [of identity and difference] are perceived in association with any entity, and because they do not apply to the self, this self does not exist.

[The self is compared to a carriage cognized in dependence on its parts]

(150) Consequently, the basis of clinging to an "I" is not an entity. It is not different from the psychophysical aggregates, it is not the essence of the aggregates, it is not the receptacle of the aggregates *(skan-*

dhadhāra),[181] and it does not possess them. [The self, which is the basis of clinging to an "I,"] is established in dependence on the aggregates.[182]

(151) [The self is, in this respect, similar to a carriage.] One does not consider a carriage to be different from its own parts, nor to be identical, nor to be in possession of them, nor is it "in" the parts, nor are they "in" it, nor is it the mere composite [of its parts]; nor is it the shape [of those parts].[183]

(152) If the carriage were simply the composite [of its parts], then it would exist even when [the parts] were disassembled. Also, it is unreasonable [to assume that] the carriage is the mere shape [of the parts], since in that event there would be no possessor of the parts *(aṅgin)* and consequently no parts.[184]

(153) According to our opponent, even when included in the carriage, the shape of each part is the same as it was previously, [at the time when the carriage was not yet assembled]. It follows that the carriage no more exists after assembly than it did among the disassembled parts.[185]

(154) If, within the assembled carriage, the shape of the wheels and other parts is different [from the way it was before assembly,] then this [difference] should be evident. It is not, however, and therefore the carriage is not simply its shape.[186]

(155) Again, according to our opponent, there is no real "composite." In this case, the [carriage] could not be the shape of the composite of its parts, for how could there be any "shape" associated with that which is nonexistent?[187]

(156) It is just as you, our opponent, have maintained:[188] The image of an effect, with an unreal quality of intrinsic being, [arises] in dependence on an unreal cause. One must realize that all things are produced in exactly this way.[189]

(157) As a consequence, it would be unreasonable to assert that cognition of a jug [is founded] on the form of the jug, for example, which is analogous [to the parts of the carriage]. Form and the other aggregates do not exist, because they are not produced, and therefore it is illogical [to suppose] that they possess any shape.[190]

[The self as a dependent designation *(prajñaptir upādāya)*]

(158) Even though [the existence of the carriage] must remain unproven according to any of the seven alternatives [enumerated above] either in the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] or in the context of everyday experience, nevertheless, for everyday purposes it is designated in dependence on its parts—without analysis.[191]

(159) This very [carriage] is a possessor of parts or pieces, it is

referred to in the world as an "agent," and for [common] people it is even established as the "appropriator."[192] Do not lose touch with the screen taken for granted in the context of everyday experience.[193]

(160) How does that which is nonexistent according to the seven alternatives nevertheless exist? The meditator does not find it to be existent, and he also easily penetrates to the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. Therefore one should consider [the things of the world] to be established as [we have demonstrated] here.

(161) When the carriage does not exist, then the "possessor of the parts" does not exist, and neither do the parts.[194] Just as, for example, when a carriage has burned, its parts no longer exist, so when the fire of discrimination *(mati)* burns the possessor of parts, the parts themselves [are incinerated].[195]

(162) Similarly, because it is taken for granted in the context of everyday experience, we consider the self also to be the appropriator, in dependence on the psychophysical aggregates, the elements, and the six sense organs with their respective objects *(ṣaḍāyatanas)*.[196] The appropriated substratum is the object of the action,[197] and the [self] is the agent.[198]

(163) However, because there is no such entity, it is neither eternal nor transitory; it is not produced, nor is it destroyed. It has no quality of permanence and so forth, nor of identity, nor of difference.[199]

(164) The self is that with reference to which awareness of clinging to an "I" is continually manifest to all living beings, and awareness of "mine" becomes manifest with reference to that which [the "I"] possesses. This [self] exists as the result of delusion, insofar as it is taken for granted without [meditative] examination.[200]

(165) No object of an action exists in the absence of an action, and so, in the absence of a self, there is no "mine." The meditator sees the emptiness of "I" and "mine," and he will be liberated.[201]

[Summary of the refutation of production]

(166) A jug, a woollen or burlap cloth, an army, a forest grove, a rosary, a heavenly tree, a house, a small cart, a guesthouse, and so on and so on—these things and whatever else that is, like them, apprehended by living beings: They are to be understood [as conventionally real], because the sage had no quarrel with the world.

(167) Qualities, parts, clinging, distinguishing characteristics, fuel, and so on and so on; [in addition to] a possessor of qualities or parts, a base for clinging or for distinguishing characteristics, fire, and so on: Such things do not exist according to the seven alternatives when, after the manner of the carriage, they are subjected to analysis. On the other

hand, they do exist insofar as they are taken for granted in the context of everyday experience.

(168) If a cause produces its requisite effect, then on that very account it is a cause. If no effect is produced, then, in the absence [of any effect], the cause does not exist. It follows that when the cause exists, the effect will necessarily be produced [from it]. [If you, our opponent, wish to maintain that both of them are established as intrinsically existent, then] please state which will emerge from which, and which [of the two] will emerge first.[202]

(169) If, according to our opponent, the cause produces its effect through connection [with it], then in that event, since both of them would have the same potentiality, there would be no difference between the agent of production and the effect. If, on the other hand, [the cause and its effect are absolutely] discrete, then the cause would not be distinguishable from any non-cause. And apart from these two, there is no other conception [of the cause-effect relationship].[203]

(170) If you say that the cause does not produce the effect, then [we respond as follows:] There is in that case nothing to be referred to as "the effect"; [moreover,] a cause divorced from any effect becomes a non-cause, and such a thing simply does not exist.[204] Because we maintain that both [cause and effect] are like magical illusions, therefore we are subject to no [logical] fallacy, and the elements of everyday experience are left intact.[205]

[Defense of the Prāsaṅgika's use of deconstructive analysis]

(171) [*Objection*] Does [your] refutation refute that which is to be refuted by connecting [with it], or is there no connection [between the two]? Does not the fallacy [just set forth] accrue to you, [the Prāsaṅgika,] as well? When you speak like this you only defeat your own position, and this being the case, you are incapable of refuting [the position of an opponent].

(172) The consequence of your words is like a double-edged sword—without reason you deny [the existence of] all entities. Noble men would never agree with you, for lacking any position of your own, you make use of any sort of refutation so as to construct an argument.[206]

(173) [*Response*] Does a refutation refute [an opponent's position] without connection, or is there connection? The fallacy already mentioned above would certainly accrue to any position entailing [belief in intrinsic] existence. This consequence is of no concern to us, however, because we have no position.[207]

(174) According to our opponent, the characteristics that are found in the sphere of the sun are also [apparent] in its reflection, where one

may perceive the alterations [resulting from] an eclipse, for example. Although it would obviously be unreasonable [to speak of] "connection" or "non-connection" between the sun and its reflection, still, as a mere dependent conventional reality, [the reflection] does arise.

(175) Similarly, even though it is not a real [face, the reflection in a mirror] is useful for a person who desires to make himself attractive, and in this way it does [conventionally] exist. In the present instance, [our] arguments are just like [a reflection] through which one becomes aware of the possibility of cleansing [spiritual ignorance from] the face of wisdom. They are to be understood as capable of establishing certain conclusions even without recourse to generally accepted [concepts of objectively grounded meaning].

(176) If the argument designed to substantiate your conclusion is [taken for] an objective fact,[208] and the nature of the conclusion is also understood to be an objective fact, then arguments like the one presented above on "connection" would be relevant. In this case [we maintain no such reified concepts], and [our opponent's objection] amounts to nothing more than his own [unsubstantiated] belief.[209]

(177) It is relatively easy to understand what is meant by the absence of intrinsic being within all things, but it is quite a bit more difficult to comprehend [the ramifications of this concept of] intrinsic being. Indeed, why do you ensnare the world in the dangerous net of your rationalism?

(178) One must understand that any remaining refutations [not specifically dealt with here] are implicit in what has already been demonstrated above, and they also could be offered as responses to positions involving [notions of] "connection," and so forth. It is not true that we Prāsaṅgikas make use of any sort of refutation. As previously explained, any additional [arguments] are to be developed by using the same technique [of reductio ad absurdum].

[The sixteen examples of emptiness[210] Introduction]

(179) Selflessness was explained under two aspects, for the liberation of all living beings, as differentiated into: selflessness of [insentient] things *(dharmanairātmya);* and selflessness of the person *(pudgalanairātmya).* In addition, the master reclassified these same [two categories] and taught about them under several different aspects, for the benefit of various types of disciples.

(180) He explained sixteen [aspects of] emptiness, each one accompanied with examples, and subsequently he condensed these into four explanations which are accepted by the Mahāyāna.

[The examples of emptiness]

(181) [I] The eye is empty of eye[ness], because that is its intrinsic nature. The ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind are also to be accounted for in this way.

(182) The eye and the other [five of the] six [faculties] are neither eternal nor subject to decay, and their absence of intrinsic being is referred to as "internal emptiness" *(adhyātmaśūnyatā)*.

(183) [II] Form *(rūpa)* is empty of form[ness], because that is its intrinsic nature. Sound, odor, taste, tactile and [mental] things are also similar [to form in this respect].

(184) The absence of any essence within form and the others is referred to as "external emptiness" *(bahirdhāśūnyatā)*. [III] The absence of intrinsic being associated with both is [called] "internal-external emptiness" *(adhyātmabahirdhāśūnyatā)*.

(185) [IV] The absence of intrinsic being of [all] things is referred to by wise men as "emptiness," and this emptiness also is considered to be empty of any essence of emptiness.

(186) The emptiness of what is called "emptiness" is referred to as "the emptiness of emptiness" *(śūnyatāśūnyatā)*, and it is explained in this way for the purpose of controverting any understanding of emptiness as an [ontological reference to] "being."[211]

(187) [V] The directions are vast, since they engulf without remainder the insentient world as well as sentient beings, and since, as an example of the immeasurable, they are without any bounds.

(188) The emptiness of the ten directions is [called] "the vast emptiness" *(mahāśūnyatā)*, and it was explained in this way for the purpose of controverting any understanding of vastness [as an ontological reference to "being"].

(189) [VI] Nirvāṇa is of the highest meaning because it is the most excellent goal, and its emptiness [of intrinsic being] is [called] "the emptiness of the highest meaning" *(paramārthaśūnyatā)*.

(190) The emptiness of the highest meaning was taught by those who know the [truth of the] highest meaning, for the purpose of controverting any understanding of nirvāṇa as [an ontological reference to] "being."

(192) [VII] The triple world is designated as composite because it arises from [causes and] conditions. Its emptiness of [intrinsic being] is [called] "the emptiness of composite things" *(saṁskṛtaśūnyatā)*.

(193) [VIII] That which has no extremes is called the transcendence of extremes. Its emptiness of just that [transcendence of extremes] is referred to as "the emptiness of the transcendence of extremes" *(atyantaśūnyatā)*.[212]

(194–195) [IX] The round of transmigration has no beginning or end, and because of this, it is called the absence of beginning and end. Existence is devoid of coming and going, like a dream, and its voidness of [beginning, middle, and end] is referred to in philosophical treatises *(śāstras)* as "the emptiness of that which is without beginning and end" *(anavarāgraśūnyatā)*.

(196) [X] That which is rejected and expelled is called blameworthy, and the blameless is what is not abandoned—it is anything not rejected.

(197) [The blameless] is empty of blamelessness, and this is called "the emptiness of the blameless" *(anavakāraśūnyatā)*.

(198–199) [XI] The essence of composite [and noncomposite] things is not created by the disciples *(śrāvakas)*, the pratyekabuddhas, the sons of the buddha, or the tathāgatas, and therefore this essence of composite [and noncomposite] things is referred to as the fundamental source. The emptiness of this [fundamental source] of the same [fundamental source] is [called] "the emptiness of the fundamental source" *(prakṛtiśūnyatā)*.

(200–201) [XII] The eighteen elements,[213] the six tangible sense organs *(sparśāyatana)*, and the six sensations that originate from them, in addition to that with form and that which is without form, as well as composite and noncomposite things: The emptiness [of intrinsic being] with respect to all of these is [called] "the emptiness of all things" *(sarvadharmaśūnyatā)*. [XIII] Form and the other [aggregates] are without any essence, and [their emptiness] is [called] "the emptiness of any intrinsic distinguishing characteristic" *(svalakṣaṇaśūnyatā)*.

(202) Form possesses the intrinsic distinguishing characteristic of color and shape; feeling *(vedanā)* has the self-nature of experience; apperception *(saṁjñā)* apprehends [internal and external] distinguishing characteristics; the prenatal dispositions *(saṁskāras)* are that which fashions [mental, vocal, and physical action].

(203) The distinguishing characteristic of consciousness *(vijñāna)* is cognition of discrete objects. Misery is the intrinsic distinguishing characteristic of [all five] psychophysical aggregates, and the self-nature of the [eighteen] elements is considered a venomous serpent.

(204) The buddha declared that the sense organs and their respective sensory fields *(āyatanas)* are the gateway to birth. Dependent origination is the distinguishing characteristic of [all] composite things.

(205) Giving is [the distinguishing characteristic] of the perfection of generosity; the absence of anxiety is the distinguishing characteristic of morality; the distinguishing characteristic of patience is lack of anger; and that of energy is freedom from slothfulness.

(206) Meditation possesses the distinguishing characteristic of concentration, and the distinguishing characteristic of wisdom is noncling-

ing. These are called the distinguishing characteristics of the six perfections.

(207) The perfectly knowing one declared that the [eight levels of] meditation *(dhyānas)*, the immeasurables, and likewise any other of the formless [meditations] possess the distinguishing characteristic of freedom from agitation.[214]

(208) The thirty-seven ancillary factors to awakening have the intrinsic distinguishing characteristic of contributing to escape [from the round of transmigration] *(naiśkramya)*. [The three gateways to deliverance[215] have the following intrinsic characteristics:] (First,) emptiness is unapprehended, and therefore its distinguishing characteristic is isolation *(viveka)* [from the defilements of reified concepts].

(209)[216] (Second,) signlessness [has the distinguishing characteristic of] peace. (Third,) the distinguishing characteristic of the third [gateway] (wishlessness) is the absence of misery and confusion. The [eight types of] deliverance *(aṣṭavimokṣas)* have the distinguishing characteristic of contributing to liberation.

(210)[217] The [ten] powers are said to have the intrinsic nature of extreme precision in ordering [the sensory fields]. The [four types of] fearlessness in rescuing [all living beings from suffering] are the essence of extreme stability.

(211) The [four types of] analytic knowledge *(pratisaṁvid)*—confidence and the other three,[218] possess the distinguishing characteristic of inseparability. Securing benefit for all living beings is called "the great lovingkindness" *(mahāmaitri)*.

(212) "The great compassion" *(mahākaruṇā)* rescues those who are immersed in suffering. Sympathetic joy [in the happiness of others] is the distinguishing characteristic of "the great joy" *(mahāmuditā)*. Equanimity *(upekṣā)* is said to possess the distinguishing characteristic of unscatteredness *(avyavakīrṇatā)*.

(213) The unique qualities *(āveṇikadharmas)* [of a buddha] are considered to be eighteen in number, and because the master did not expropriate them [from another], so they possess the intrinsic distinguishing characteristic of nonexpropriation.

(214) Direct perception *(pratyakṣa)* is considered to be the distinguishing characteristic of the omniscient wisdom [of a buddha]. Other [conceptually based knowledge] is not referred to as "direct perception," because it is involved in the ephemeral.

(215) [XIV] The ultimate emptiness of any distinguishing characteristic within composite and noncomposite things is [called] "the emptiness of the intrinsic distinguishing characteristic" *(svalakṣaṇaśūnyatā)*.

(216) [XV] The present does not endure, and the past and future do

not exist. These are not apprehended, so they are referred to as "the unapprehended."

(217) The unapprehended is devoid of any intrinsic essence, neither does it endure eternally nor is it subject to decay, and this is [called] "the emptiness of the unapprehended" *(anupalambhaśūnyatā).*

(218) [XVI] Entities are without any essential quality of composition, because they originate from [causes and] conditions. The emptiness of this quality of composition is [called] "the emptiness of the nonentity" *(abhāvaśūnyatā).*[219]

[The four condensed explanations]

(219) In brief, the word "entity" refers to the five psychophysical aggregates. They are empty of [intrinsic being], and this is explained as "the emptiness of the [composite] entity" *(bhāvaśūnyatā).*[220]

(220) Again, put briefly, noncomposite things are referred to as "nonentities." They are empty of the [intrinsic nature of] a nonentity, and this is [called] "the emptiness of the nonentity" *(abhāvaśūnyatā).*

(221) (Third,) intrinsic nature is not fabricated [by the śrāvakas, the pratyekabuddhas, or the bodhisattvas], and so it is designated as "intrinsic nature." The absence of an essence associated with intrinsic nature is [called] "the emptiness of intrinsic nature" *(svabhāvaśūnyatā).*

(222) (Fourth,) regardless of whether or not any buddha were to become incarnate, the emptiness of all entities would still be proclaimed as "being another" *(parabhāva).*

(223) In the system [presented in the literature dealing with] perfect wisdom, the "reality limit" *(bhūtakoṭi)* and "suchness" *(tathatā)* are [both called] "the emptiness of being another" *(parabhāvaśūnyatā).*

[Conclusion]

(224) [The bodhisattva] radiates light through the brilliant ray of wisdom. He realizes that this triple world is like a medicinal herb lying in the palm of his own hand, since it is from the beginning unproduced. And through the power of conventional truth he goes on to cessation.[221]

(225) Even though his mind rests perpetually in cessation, still he generates compassion for all living beings that are without any protector. Later, through his wisdom, he will triumph over the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha.

(226) With his broad white wings of the screen and of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning], the king of the swans soars ahead of the common flock.[222] Held aloft by the strong wind of

virtue, he passes over to excellence on the farther shore of the ocean of royal [buddha] qualities.

So ends the sixth [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Directly Facing" *(Abhimūkhī),* according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE SEVENTH STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE FAR ADVANCED *(DŪRAṄGAMĀ)*

(1a–c)[1] At the stage [called] "The Far Advanced" [the bodhisattva] enters into cessation [of dualistic thought][2] from one moment to the next, and his skillful means also attain a glorious brilliance.

So ends the seventh [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Far Advanced" *(Dūraṅgamā)*, according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE EIGHTH STAGE IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE IMMOVABLE *(ACALĀ)*

(1d–2) The [thought of awakening] becomes irreversible when, for the purpose of gaining greater and greater virtue, the mighty one enters into the [stage called] "The Immovable." His vow [to rescue all living beings] is entirely purified, and the conquerors lift him from cessation.[1]

(3) The wisdom of nonclinging does not abide in the company of any faults, and therefore at the eighth stage these impurities along with their roots are thoroughly eradicated. The afflictions have been extinguished, yet even though [the bodhisattva] is preeminent in the triple world, still he is unable to obtain the treasure of the [qualities] of the buddhas, which is limitless as the heavens.

(4a–b) Although the round of transmigration has been stopped, [the bodhisattva] will go on to obtain the ten powers and use them for the benefit of living beings.

So ends the eighth [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Immovable" *(Acalā),* according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE NINTH STAGE
IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE UNERRING INTELLECT *(SĀDHUMATĪ)*

(4c–d) At the ninth [stage] each and every power is fully purified, and likewise, [the bodhisattva] also obtains the [four] completely pure intrinsic qualities *(svaguṇas)*[1] of analytic knowledge.

So ends the ninth [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Unerring Intellect" *(Sādhumatī)*, according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way*.

THE TENTH STAGE
IN THE GENERATION OF THE THOUGHT OF AWAKENING

THE CLOUD OF DHARMA *(DHARMAMEGHĀ)*

(5) At the tenth [stage, the bodhisattva] receives from all the buddhas the most sacred investiture, and his wisdom as well reaches its zenith. Like the shower falling from a thundercloud, the rain of the Dharma falls spontaneously from the son of the conquerors to ripen the crop of virtue in all living beings.

So ends the tenth [stage in the] generation of the thought of awakening called "The Cloud of Dharma" *(Dharmameghā)*, according to the exposition given in *The Entry into the Middle Way.*

THE QUALITIES AND FRUITS OF THE TEN STAGES

[The qualities associated with the ten stages of the bodhisattva's path]

(1) During [the first stage, the bodhisattva] sees a hundred buddhas and understands that they have invested him with their blessing. He remains at this stage for hundreds of eons, and [his wisdom] permeates the initial and terminal boundaries [of this period of time].

(2) The wise one enters into and arises from a hundred stages of balanced concentration. He is capable of shaking a hundred world systems, or of illuminating them. And likewise, by means of his supernormal powers he spiritually matures a hundred living beings and travels to as many [buddha] fields.

(3) He throws open the gates of the Dharma. The son of the sages manifests within his own body [a hundred other] bodies—each one of them enhanced by its own retinue and displayed in company with a hundred sons of the conquerors.

(4–5) While dwelling in [the second stage called] "The Immaculate," the wise one obtains one thousand times as many qualities as were obtained during his stay at [the stage called] "The Joyous," and during the succeeding five stages the bodhisattva obtains one hundred thousand times the original number [of qualities], then one hundred million times as many, then one billion, one hundred billion, and at the seventh stage, thousands of billions of times as many qualities.

(6) [The bodhisattva] who abides free from reified concepts at the stage [called] "The Immovable" obtains qualities equal in number to the measure of atoms contained in three hundred million world systems taken together.

(7) At the [ninth] stage [called] "The Unerring Intellect," the bodhisattva obtains the qualities mentioned above [in numbers equal to] ten times the measure of atoms in countless hundreds of thousands [of world systems] taken together.

(8) These qualities of his acquired here through the levels of the ten

[stages] far exceed the range of speech, for they are as vast as the total number of atoms [in the cosmos]—an inexpressible figure.

(9) Moment by moment, in the pores of the bodhisattva's body, countless fully awakened buddhas are displayed, along with gods, demons, men, and other living beings.

[The qualities associated with the stage of a fully awakened buddha]

(1)[1] The moon shines brightly only in a stainless sky, and therefore, at this point you [the bodhisattva] must once again exert yourself in order to reach the stage where the ten powers [of a buddha] are produced.[2] You must attain the highest [stage of a buddha], the place of most excellent peace, the incomparable limit to all [buddha] qualities.

[The sameness of all things]

(2) Despite the divisions created by vessels, space is itself without any divisions. Similarly, the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] is undivided by the presence of entities.[3] [The bodhisattva] fully comprehends the uniformity [of all things *(dharmas)*], and with this noble realization he comprehends [all] objects of knowledge in a single instant.

(3) [*Objection*] If reality is peace, then the intellect will never penetrate [to the truth of the highest meaning], and there can be no knowledge of an object which the intellect cannot reach. This being the case, when there is no knowledge whatsoever, how can there be any act of knowing? These are the contradictions [implicit in your words]. And in the absence of anyone who knows, according to you, who could teach to others that this is so?[4]

(4) [*Response*] When nonproduction *is* reality, and the intellect as well is unproduced, then it is as if [the intellect] conceives of reality through being dependent on [its own] images. Whatever image the mind assumes, it knows just that object—and [that object] is cognized [solely] in dependence on convention.[5]

[The three bodies of a buddha
The body of bliss *(saṁbhogakāya)*]

(5) The body of bliss of [the buddhas] is made complete through meritorious action. By the power [of the bodhisattva's previous vow], sound emanates from [bodies of] transformation, from the sky, or from other sources, and this sound teaches the reality of [all] things, so that even worldly people can know what is real.[6]

(6) Here [in the context of everyday experience], a potter's wheel is

[initially] spun through the extended efforts of a strong potter. Once turning, though, it continues to spin even without the benefit of any additional effort from the potter, and in this way it furnishes the cause for the production of jugs and other kinds of pottery.

(7) Similarly, [the buddha] puts forth no effort whatsoever as he abides in his body of the Dharma, and yet his totally inconceivable deeds are accomplished through the virtue he acquired [previously] as a living being,[7] and in particular through his vow [to lead all living beings to awakening].

[The body of the Dharma]

(8) When the dry kindling of the object of knowledge is incinerated without remainder, the peace [which remains] is the body of the Dharma of the conquerors. There is then no production and no cessation, and through [previous] termination of conceptual processes this [peace] is directly experienced through the body [of the Dharma].[8]

(9) This body of peace is copious like the wishing tree and devoid of reified concepts like a wish-fulfilling crystal.[9] Abiding indefinitely, for the benefit of the world, until the liberation of all living beings, it appears in the absence of conceptual diffusion.

[The body of transformation]

(10) Although the circumstances surrounding his own former births have ceased, simultaneously, in a single body of form realized through the appropriate cause,[10] the sage comprehensively displays a clear and ordered account of his various births:

(11) The type of buddha fields and the sages therein—their bodies, their practices, and the kinds of powers they possessed; the size and nature of his monastic order of disciples, the bodhisattvas, and the types of forms they possessed there;

(12) which [beings] followed the Dharma and which believed in a self; the Dharma they heard [being taught]; the practices in which they were engaged; the extent of their offerings and donations. All of this without remainder is displayed within a single body.

(13) Similarly, he clearly displays in the pores of this body all of the practices [which he engaged in while a bodhisattva], the totality of circumstances surrounding the earlier practice of morality, patience, energy, meditation, and wisdom.

(14) [He further displays] the buddhas who have gone and those who are yet to come, as well as those who dwell at present in the world and, through teaching the Dharma in a suitable voice extending out to the limit of the heavens, bring relief to living beings caught up in suffering.

(15) He simultaneously demonstrates in every pore his understanding that all facets of his practice—from the first thought *(bodhicitta)* up to the very essence of awakening—have possessed the intrinsic nature of a magical illusion, and that he is himself the same.

(16) Likewise, he simultaneously displays in each pore the practice of the bodhisattvas of the three times, that of the honorable pratyekabuddhas and of the śrāvakas, as well as all the circumstances surrounding the [practices of the common] people.

(17) These [deeds of the] pure [buddhas] are accomplished merely through their wish [to do so]. Worlds reaching out to the heavens are displayed in a single particle of dust so that countless numbers of them permeate its every recess—yet this dust particle does not become any larger, and the worlds themselves become no more subtle.

(18) [O blessed one,] you who are without reified concepts, until the end of existence you display from moment to moment various practices as numerous as the uncountable totality of dust particles found in the whole of Jambudvīpa.[11]

[The ten powers of a buddha
Summary]

(19) These are the ten powers [of a buddha]: [I] the power of knowledge concerning what is a proper basis [for practice] and what is not *(stānāstānajñānabala)*; [II] knowledge of the ripening of actions *(karmavipākajñānabala)*; [III] knowledge of the various aspirations [of all living beings] *(nānādhimuktijñānabala)*; [IV] the power of knowledge concerning the various elements[12] *(nānadhātujñānabala)*;

(20) [V] knowledge of the excellence or deficiency of the capacities [of various disciples] *(indriyavarāvarajñānabala)*; [VI] the power of knowledge concerning paths leading to every destination *(sarvatragāmanipratipajjñānabala)*; [VII] the power of knowledge concerning all the meditations, liberation, states of concentration, and the attainments *(sarvadhyānavimokṣasamādhisamāpattisaṁkleśavyavadānavyutthānajñānabala)*;

(21) [VIII] knowledge entailing memory of previous lives *(pūrvanivāsānusmṛtijñānabala)*; [IX] knowledge of death, transmigration, and rebirth *(cyutyutpattijñānabala)*; and [X] the power of knowledge that the influx of depravities has been exhausted *(āśravakṣayajñānabala)*.

[The ten powers of a buddha
Explanation of each power]

(22) [I] [The buddhas] who know declare that whatever is certain to be produced from a given cause has that [cause] as its basis, and what is

in contradiction [with these circumstances] as explained is not a basis. This power is explained as an unobstructed understanding incorporating innumerable objects of knowledge.

(23) [II] This power is considered to embrace objects of knowledge in all three times. It is an unobstructed, analytical capacity of understanding with respect to desirable and undesirable [actions] and those opposed to these two, with respect to action which has the nature of exhausting [polluted actions], and with respect to the great variety of ripened consequences associated with these [types of action].

(24) [III] This power is said to embrace all [living beings] throughout past, present, and future. It is an understanding of the multiplicity of inferior, middling, and superior aspirations which are created through the strength arising from clinging and the other afflictions, as well as an understanding of those aspirations hidden by other [factors].

(25) [IV] The buddhas, expert in the divisions of elements, declare that the intrinsic nature of the eye, for example, is just these elements. This infinite understanding of perfect buddhas is asserted as a power which comprehends the particularities of the elements in all their aspects.

(26) [V] This power is declared to be all-encompassing, unimpeded understanding of the relative capacity of various intentions:[13] the strongest, called superior, as well as those involved in the circumstances surrounding middling and dull [intentions], which are referred to as inferior. This also includes a similar understanding of the various faculties, the visual and so on.[14]

(27) [VI] This power is asserted to be an unobstructed, all-encompassing understanding concerning which paths lead to [the awakening of] a conqueror, which to the awakening of a pratyekabuddha, which to the awakening of a śrāvaka, and which to existence as a hungry ghost, an animal, a god or a human, or perhaps to the hell regions.

(28) [VII] This power is explained as unobstructed understanding of the different divisions [of practice followed by] the innumerable meditators of the world, including the types of meditations *(dhyānas),* the eight types of liberations *(vimuktis),* the dwelling in peace *(śamatha),* and the [nine] attainments *(samāpattis).*[15]

(29) [VIII] This power is explained as understanding that encompasses [memories of the buddha's own] past terms of existence which continued only for as long as delusion remained, as well as [memories of the past lives of] each of the other countless living beings that exist, including the causes, the location, and the nature [of each of their lives].

(30) [IX] This power is defined as an unattached, comprehensive, correct, and limitless knowledge which comprehends the time of the death, transmigration, and rebirth of each individual living being, in

association with the diverse circumstances of living beings in a world reaching out to the limits of the heavens.

(31) [X] This power is defined as an infinite, unfettered understanding that through the power of omniscience the afflictions of the conquerors, along with the seeds [of those afflictions], are immediately destroyed, whereas the wisdom of the śrāvakas [and pratyekabuddhas] eradicates the afflictions [alone].

[Conclusion]

(32) A bird does not turn back because it has reached the limit of the sky—rather, it will return because its strength has been depleted. In the same way, the śrāvakas [and pratyekabuddhas], along with the sons of the conquerors, turn back from the boundless sky of inexpressible buddha qualities.

(33) In this case, how can one like me even know of your qualities—much less describe them? Nevertheless, because the noble Nāgārjuna explained them, I also have said a very little here to aid in the removal of doubt.[16]

(34) Emptiness is profound, and the other qualities are extensive: [All the qualities of a buddha] are realized only through comprehension of a way profound and extensive.

(35) You who are of unmoving form descend incarnate into the triple world, and through [your body of] transformation you exhibit birth and passing away, as well as the wheel of the peace of awakening. Through your compassion you lead worldly people of various sorts of behavior—all those bound by the many snares of desire—to the transcendence of suffering (nirvāṇa).

(36) Without knowledge of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning], no amount of exertion will dispel all stains. The reality of all things is independent of any division, and the wisdom which has this reality as its object is also undifferentiated. Therefore, you taught all living beings that the [ostensibly] dissimilar vehicles[17] are [ultimately] without any distinction.

(37) As the result of impurities which produce faults in living beings,[18] the world does not penetrate to the profound level of a buddha's practice. O Tathāgata, because you possess wisdom along with skillful means which arise from compassion, and because you vowed to liberate all living beings—

(38) Therefore, like the wise [captain] who created en route a delightful city in order to allay the fatigue of his crew journeying to the isle of gems, you created the vehicles [of the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha] in order to direct the mind of the disciples toward a way culminating in

extinction [of the afflictions]. Elsewhere you taught [the Mahāyāna] to those whose intellect was purified and purged [of those afflictions].

(39) O Sugata, as many minute atoms as exist in the countless directions which furnish objects for [the wisdom of] the buddhas, just that many eons passed [while you strove for] most pure and excellent awakening. Indeed, this mystery of yours is not revealed [to those who have not already cultivated the proper spiritual motivation].[19]

(40) O Conqueror, your own mother is wisdom—from her you were born, and this philosophy [of the Mādhyamika] was composed by your nursemaid, compassion. How could you find peace [for yourself alone] so long as all the worlds [of living beings] have not passed over into this most excellent peace, and space itself has not been destroyed?

(41) Even a mother's suffering for her son who is endangered by poisoned food is not so great as your compassion for the living beings within [this round of transmigration], who through the fault of delusion are consuming food saturated with the poison of everyday experience. Because of this [compassion], O Blessed One, you have not passed over into most excellent peace.

(42) Unskilled creatures are controlled by a mind attached to [reified concepts of] "being" and "nonbeing," so that they are overcome by faults, and they experience suffering derived from birth and death, or from contact with unattractive things and separation from attractive things. For this reason, O Blessed One, the world has become the object of your love, and consumed with compassion, your heart draws back from the peace [of cessation]. For you there is no nirvāṇa.

EPILOGUE

(1) This approach has been set forth by the monk Candrakīrti, according to both treatises drawn from the Mādhyamika texts themselves and to the scriptural tradition.

(2) Wise men affirm that the doctrine of emptiness is not found in any philosophy other than [the Mādhyamika] and, similarly, that this particular approach as well is not found anywhere else [besides this text], although it is firmly based on [the Mādhyamika teachings].

(3) There are those who have abandoned the beneficial philosophy [of the Mādhyamika] without even trying to understand it, simply because of fear arising from the [deep] color of the wide ocean [of Nāgārjuna's profound wisdom]. Candrakīrti has now fulfilled their wishes through this [treatise which explains] the chapters of [Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakaśāstra*], like the dew which coaxes into bloom the buds of an evening lotus.

(4) Although the exposition of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] is profound and frightening, it will certainly be understood by a person who has previously cultivated [his textual study in the practice of meditation].[1] Any others will never comprehend it, despite the breadth of their learning. One must clearly perceive that all other philosophical systems are composed simply as justification for their own unstated presuppositions—as, for instance, in the case of those systems which postulate the existence of an [ultimately real] self. And once this has been done, all fascination for theses proposed outside this treatise should be relinquished.

(5) Now that this presentation of Master Nāgārjuna's most beneficial philosophy is complete, let whatever merit I have so acquired spread into every recess of the mind darkened by afflictions, like the white light of stars scattered across the blue autumn sky; or let it become a treasure held in the heart, like a jewel set into the expanded hood of a mighty cobra, so that all the worlds [of living beings] may come to understand the truth [of the highest meaning] and quickly arrive at the [final destination of the path]—the stage of a tathāgata.

NOTES

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NOTES

SECTION ONE

1. There seems to be a growing awareness of these methodological problems. Moreover, the style and content of the present work owe a great deal not only to many carefully reasoned interpretive studies, but also—as I have tried to make clear throughout—to a large body of meticulous philological and text-critical scholarship which alone provides the essential foundation for all that must follow if we are to come to terms with the Mādhyamika.

2. Gadamer 1976, 28.

3. Rorty 1982, 151. Bloom's concept of misreading ultimately derives from Derrida: "According to the paleonymic strategy urged by Derrida, 'mis-reading' retains the trace of truth, because noteworthy readings involve claims to truth and because interpretation is structured by the attempt to catch what other readings have missed and misconstrued. Since no reading can escape correction, all readings are misreadings; but this leaves not a monism but a double movement. Against the claim that, if there are only misreadings, then anything goes, one affirms that misreadings are errors; but against the positivist claim that they are errors because they strive toward but fail to attain a true reading, one maintains that true readings are only particular misreadings: misreadings whose misses have been missed. This account of misreading is not, perhaps, a coherent, consistent position, but, its advocates would claim, it resists metaphysical idealizations and captures the temporal dynamic of our interpretive situation" (Culler 1983, 178).

4. Ibid., 152.

5. Ibid.

6. Ruegg 1983, 239.

7. Ibid., 238.

8. Becker 1982, 134.

9. Gadamer 1976, xxi (translator's introduction); cf. also ibid., 11: "No assertion is possible that cannot be understood as an answer to a question, and assertions can only be understood in this way."

10. Cf. Gadamer 1988, 263–264: "Every age has to understand a transmit-

ted text in its own way, for the text is part of the whole of the tradition in which the age takes an objective interest and in which it seeks to understand itself. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and whom he originally wrote for. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always partly determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history. . . . Not occasionally only, but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a reproductive, but always a productive attitude as well. . . . It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all."

11. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines empirical as "relying on experience or observation alone often without due regard for system and theory." The very idea of such raw experience is highly questionable, and the Mādhyamika philosopher is of course not alone in calling attention to the intimate bond between one's concepts and one's experience in the world. Compare, e.g., Feyerabend 1975, 76 and passim, on the subject of natural interpretations, and Rorty 1982, 4ff.

12. Cavell 1966, 164–165.

13. Rorty 1982, xiv.

14. Ibid.; cf. also Feyerabend 1975, 189, where he characterizes the "epistemological anarchist" in similar terms: "His favorite pastime is to confuse rationalists by inventing compelling reasons for unreasonable doctrines."

15. Cf. Feyerabend 1975, 154ff., for a discussion of how these same tactics have been used throughout modern history in the service of all revolutionary ideas.

16. The possibility of communication is not as remote as it might seem, however. The subjects of conversation in medieval India, though dominated by Hindu preoccupations with metaphysical problems, were not all that different from the concerns of many twentieth-century Western philosophers dominated by Kantian epistemological preoccupations with subject and object, representation and the real, and so forth.

17. See Cavell 1966, 176–177, where Cavell quotes from Wittgenstein's lectures as reported in Moore 1955, 26.

18. Cf. *PSP*, 373: *yadā tu timiropaghātyaviparītaśūnyatādarśanāñjanāñjitabuddhinayanāḥ santaḥ samutpannatattvajñānā bhavanti tadā tat tattvam anadhigamanayogena svayam adhigacchantīti* / (When, however, their eye of awakening is anointed with the salve of the direct vision of emptiness, which cures any optical defect, and [nondualistic] knowledge of reality has arisen [within them], then these people realize for themselves the reality of that [which had been previously misunderstood]—by not realizing it!) (All translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.) It is extremely important to see that the Mādhyamika does not take for granted an epistemology that preserves all the old presuppositions about knowledge as representation, as a relationship between an independent subjective presence and its objective referents. What must, in the beginning, be characterized as a new conceptualization of the world turns out, in the end, to be a modified observational language incorporating its own set of natural observations. Also see Rorty 1982, 4ff., and §4.5, below.

19. Gadamer 1976, 27, and 1988, 270.

20. My major regret in this respect is that I have been unable to include here a complete translation of Candrakīrti's own commentary on *The Entry into the Middle Way,* which would have greatly facilitated understanding of the text. This project is presently under way, but it will not be ready for some time, and it seemed best to go ahead with publication of a translation of the stanzas. Only a very small percentage of the Mādhyamika literature is available in Western languages. We do not yet even have a complete translation of any one commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakaśāstra,* the most fundamental of all Mādhyamika sources!

21. Here is the force of the claim embodied in proselytic scholarship, for the entire deconstructive project of the Mādhyamika needs to be read as a response to the question: How can all living beings find happiness, peace, and liberation from every form of fear and suffering? But mere reconstruction does not suffice to make this a real question for us.

22. Jong 1974, 26.

23. Ruegg 1967, 5.

24. Gadamer 1976, 92.

25. Demiéville (1973, 247) seems to find a similar stress on purpose or application in the early Chinese understanding of the Buddhist "absolute": "L'idéalisme naïf qui nie l'existence des choses exclurait une telle activité [désintéressé] et fausserait le rapport entre l'esprit et les choses en y introduisant un dualisme, une relativité qui doit être neutralisée en un absolu, absolu conçu du reste en ses conséquences pratiques."

26. Cf. *MA* 6.119: */ rang gi lta la chags dang de bzhin du // gzhan gyi lta la 'khrug gang rtog pa nyid // de'i phyir 'dod chags khong khro rnam bsal te // rnam dpyod pa na myur du grol bar 'gyur /* (Attachment to one's own view and likewise aversion to the view of another is itself evidence of reified thinking. When one sets aside attachment and aversion and conducts an analysis [of all views], he will soon find liberation.)

27. Cf. Rorty's (1982, 35) concerns about Pears's interpretation of Wittgenstein.

28. The first quotation is *MS* 13.8cd: *yeṣāṁ tu śūnyatādṛṣṭis tān asādhyān babhāṣire;* the second appears in *PSP,* 540, where it is cited by Candrakīrti from an unidentified source. The entire verse reads, "The lord of the world taught that no salvation is itself salvation—a knot made by space is released only by space" *(anirvāṇaṁ hi nirvāṇaṁ lokanāthena deśitaṁ / ākāśena kṛto granthir ākāśenaiva mocitaḥ//).* Cf. Wittgenstein: "Why is philosophy so complicated? It ought to be *entirely* simple. Philosophy unties the knots in our thinking that we have, in a senseless way, put there. To do this it must make movements as complicated as these knots are. Although the *results* of philosophy are simple, its method cannot be, if it is to succeed. The complexity of philosophy is not its subject matter, but our knotted understanding" (cited in Fann 1969, 103 n. 4).

SECTION TWO

1. In this discussion I have used the term Hīnayāna as it is used by Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, and other Mahāyānists; in fact, the Mādhyamika critique

was almost certainly directed against only one of at least eighteen early Indian Hīnayāna sects, the Sarvāstivāda: see Lamotte 1944–1980, 3:xv ff., for a discussion of the Sarvāstivādin literature.

2. Stcherbatsky 1923 still provides the best introductory survey of the Hīnayāna concept of a *dharma.* The most recent interpretation of the Mahāyāna critique of this concept is Gudmunsen 1977.

3. The English word *reality* is misleading here: Sanskrit *tattva* is composed of two grammatical elements: *tat* 'that' or 'it,' and *tva* '-ness,' a suffix used to form abstract nouns. *Tattva* is etymologically "that-ness" or "it-ness."

4. In fact, as Daye (1975, 84) has suggested, "emptiness" is a "non-referring term," a "third-order capstone *reflexive* concept."

5. Runes 1942, 210, defines nihilism as follows: "The doctrine that nothing, or nothing of a specified and very general class, exists, or is knowable, or is valuable. Thus Gorgias held that (1) nothing exists; (2) Even if something did exist it could not be known; (3) Even if it were known this knowledge could not be communicated." This would certainly represent the philosophical view of "nonbeing" *(abhāva).*

6. See §3.4.1.

7. Candrakīrti's position on this issue is clearly stated in *PSP,* 75: *satsu pramāṇeṣu prameyārthāḥ satsu prameyeṣv artheṣu pramāṇāni / no tu khalu svābhāvikī pramāṇaprameyayoḥ siddhiḥ* (Insofar as there are means of knowledge, there are objects of knowledge; and insofar as there are objects of knowledge, there are means of knowledge. It is certain that neither the means nor the object of knowledge can be established in and of itself.) Cf. Gadamer 1976, 50–51: "Just as the relation between the speaker and what is spoken points to a dynamic process that does not have a firm basis in either member of the relation, so the relation between the understanding and what is understood has a priority over its relational terms. Understanding is not self-understanding in the sense of the self-evident certainty idealism asserted it to have, nor is it exhausted in the revolutionary criticism of idealism that thinks of the concept of self-understanding as something that happens to the self, something through which it becomes an authentic self. Rather, I believe that understanding involves a moment of 'loss of self' that is relevant to theological hermeneutics and should be investigated in terms of the structure of the game."

8. See §1, n. 18.

9. Kuhn's and Feyerabend's concept of "incommensurability" is especially relevant in this context. See, e.g., Feyerabend 1975, 229: "Should we welcome the fact, if it is a fact, that an adult is stuck with a stable perceptual world and an accompanying stable conceptual system, which he can modify in many ways but whose general outlines have forever become immobilized? Or is it not more realistic to assume that fundamental changes, entailing incommensurability, are still possible and that they should be encouraged lest we remain forever excluded from what might be a higher stage of knowledge and consciousness? . . . The attempt to break through the boundaries of a given conceptual system . . . involves much more than a prolonged 'critical discussion' as some relics of the enlightenment would have us believe. One must be able to *produce* and to *grasp* new perceptual and conceptual relations, including relations which are

not immediately apparent and that cannot be achieved by a critical discussion alone."

10. On these terms, see Conze 1962, 166–173, and accompanying references: "The three classes of enlightened persons."

11. *MAB,* 182.20. Tibetan translators chose to render the two components of this title as "a hero whose thought *(sems dpa')* is of purity and perfection *(byang chub).*"

12. For references to editions and translations, see the bibliography. The most comprehensive modern study on the bodhisattva ideal is certainly Dayal 1932. Another very important classical source for our understanding of the subject is found in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra (VN).*

13. Cf. La Vallée Poussin 1916, 739.

14. *MVA* 1:231–239. See Conze 1959, 20–24, for an English translation of the *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka.*

15. So La Vallée Poussin 1916, 744ff., where these stages are reviewed and discussed in accord with information provided in *MVA* and *BB.*

16. Cf. *MA* 6.4–7, where Candrakīrti presents a very similar account of the requirements for proper study and actualization of emptiness.

17. Cf. La Vallée Poussin 1916, 745.

18. Suzuki 1900, chap. 2 (translation of the *Mahāyānaśraddhotpādaśāstra*).

19. Suzuki 1963, 307.

20. See, e.g., *MS* 24.11: "When wrongly perceived, emptiness destroys a dull-witted person like a snake improperly grasped, or like a magical formula insufficiently mastered."

21. See part 2, note to *MA* 1.16, on the difference between a mundane and a supramundane perfection. On the distinction between wisdom *(prajñā)* as cause and as effect, see §4.6.2: "The relationship of perfect wisdom to the other perfections."

22. The archetype of all forms of reified thought is defined by the hypostatized concepts of being *(bhāva)* and nonbeing *(abhāva).*

SECTION THREE

1. The nucleus of this work appears in Sprung's bibliography (Sprung 1979); for a more detailed review of the literature, see Robinson 1967, Ruegg 1981, and Lindtner 1982. The most comprehensive information on all editions and translations of Mādhyamika texts is incorporated into the bibliography to Mimaki 1982, which also refers extensively to other non-Mādhyamika sources.

2. See the bibliography, under *PSP.* The reader is cautioned to read Sprung's translation with an awareness of his presuppositions (see the discussion on Murti—who apparently had a strong influence on Sprung's work—in the next section; also see n. 25, below).

3. Nāgārjuna's importance to the school is undisputed. However, there is some difference of opinion as to which texts can be legitimately attributed to him. Generally speaking, in addition to *MS* the following six treatises are ascribed to Nāgārjuna by modern Buddhologists: (1) *Yuktiṣaṣṭika,* (2) *Vigraha-*

vyāvartanī, (3) *Suhṛllekha,* (4) *Ratnāvalī,* (5) *Śūnyatāsaptati,* and (6) *Vaidalyasūtraprakaraṇa.* Cf. Lindtner 1982 for a detailed review of the evidence, and Williams 1984 for further consideration of this material.

4. For an English translation of Bu ston, see Obermiller 1931–1932; for Tāranātha, see Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970.

5. What follows is no more than a cursory review of the major trends in Buddhist studies in the West. Several very competent and useful studies do not fall easily into any category, but these three phases are certainly the only thoroughgoing attempts at interpretation of the Mādhyamika thus far proposed in the West.

6. Keith 1923 represents the Mādhyamika as a doctrine based on a conception of reality as "absolute nothingness" (237, 239, 247, 267); and Kern 1896 calls it "complete and pure nihilism" (126).

7. See, e.g., *MS* 14.7 and *PSP,* 490: *sa bhavān svavikalpanayaiva nāstitvaṁ śūnyatārtha ity evaṁ viparītam adhyāropya . . . upālambhaṁ bruvāṇo 'smāsu* (You, sir, falsely impute to emptiness a nihilistic meaning—your own reified concept . . . vilifying us with this insulting accusation.) Cf. n. 24, below.

8. *RV* 1.79 ab, d: */ sdig dang bsod nams bya ba 'das // zab mo bkrol ba'i don dang ldan //* [*mu stegs gzhan dang rang gi yang /*] */ gnas med 'jigs pas ma myangs pa'o /*

9. Stcherbatsky 1927, 207. Cf. ibid., 217: "This is a purely Mahāyānistic doctrine, viz. that Buddha, as soon as he became a real Buddha, did not speak, because human speech is not adapted to express, and human knowledge incapable to realize conceptually, that unique Substance of the Universe with which the Buddha himself is identified."

10. It may be objected that Murti is, after all, an Indian author, and therefore his work ought not to be considered in this review of Western scholarship. In response to this objection I would point out that his book has had a profound influence on the way the Mādhyamika is understood in the West, and it is routinely cited as an authoritative source. See, e.g., Sprung 1979 and Bhattacharya, Johnston, and Kunst 1978.

11. Murti 1960, 235. Examples of this sort of language can be multiplied indefinitely. But Murti's book is inconsistent, for elsewhere he seems consciously to avoid references to a "transcendent ground" or a "thing in itself"—e.g., ibid., 162–163 and 140.

12. Reference to a "transcendent ground" must, however, be defended against charges that concepts of such an underlying reality would be nothing more than references to the fourth member of the tetralemma *(catuṣkoṭi).* Cf. Ruegg 1983, 223–224: "Thus, according to mKhas grub rje and his school, the Mādhyamika's refraining from asserting a thesis *(dam bca'; pratijñā)* or tenet *(khas len; abhyupagama)* is [not] to be interpreted . . . as a quasi-thesis (which would in effect be comparable to position 4 of the 'tetralemma' [*catuṣkoṭi*] where an indeterminate entity 'x' is posited and defined as being without the predicates 'A' and 'Ā'—in terms, perhaps, of a logic which is not two-valued and based on the principle of bivalence, or in terms of some 'logic of mysticism' postulating an ineffable entity)." Cf. also ibid., 206 n. 2, and *MA* 6.146, where Candrakīrti rejects the concept of an ineffable reality. The same criticisms apply to the claim that the Mādhyamika is not philosophy but mysticism (see § 5.6).

13. *MS* 18.8: *sarvaṁ tathyaṁ na vā tathyaṁ tathyaṁ cātathyam eva ca / naivātathyaṁ naiva tathyam etad buddhānuśāsanaṁ //*

14. The Naiyāyikas were a strict empiricist school of philosophy in ancient India.

15. I use the expression here as the nearest equivalent for the Sanskrit *sādhyasama,* with due regard for the information provided by Bhattacharya, Johnston, and Kunst 1978, 22–23 n. 3. Also cf. Bhattacharya 1974, 225–230; and Matilal 1974, 221–224.

16. *VV* 29: *yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣaḥ / nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣaḥ //*

17. Rorty 1982, 161.

18. Ibid., 86.

19. See, e.g., *MS* 15.10: *astīti śāśvatagrāho nāstīty ucchedadarśanaṁ / tasmād astitvanāstitve nāśrīyeta vicakṣaṇaḥ //* ("Existence" is grasping at the eternal, "nonexistence" is the philosophy of nihilism: Therefore the wise man does not rely on "existence" or "nonexistence.") Candrakīrti comments (*PSP,* 273): "These teachings of 'existence' and 'nonexistence' create obstacles [even] on the path to heaven and cause great misfortune."

20. *PSP,* 247–248: *yo na kiṁ cid api te paṇyaṁ dāsyāmīty uktaḥ saced dehi bhos tadeva mahyaṁ na kiṁ cin nāma paṇyam iti brūyāt . . . /*

21. See, e.g., *MS* 15.7–11 (especially v. 10), and Candrakīrti's comments in *PSP,* 269–279. Also see §3.3: "History and doctrine of the Middle Way."

22. See §2, n. 5, above.

23. *MS* 24.1: *yadi śūnyam idaṁ sarvaṁ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ / caturṇām āryasatyānām abhāvas te prasajyate //*

24. *MS* 24.5cd: *evaṁ trīṇy api ratnāni bruvāṇāḥ pratibādhase //*

25. See *MS* 24.7 and Candrakīrti's comments (*PSP,* 491): *ato niravaśeṣaprapañcopaśamārthaṁ śūnyatopadiśyate / tasmāt sarvaprapañcopaśamaḥ śūnyatāyāṁ prayojanaṁ / bhavāṁs tu nāstitvaṁ śūnyatārthaṁ parikalpayan prapañcajālam eva saṁvardhayamāno na śūnyatāyāṁ prayojanaṁ vetti //* (Emptiness is taught in order to calm conceptual diffusion completely; therefore, its purpose is the calming of all conceptual diffusion. You, however, in imagining that the meaning of emptiness is nonexistence, actually reinforce the net of conceptual diffusion. On this account you do not understand the purpose of emptiness.) Sprung's translation is particularly unreliable here and can be compared with this one as an example of the absolutist interpretation at work.

26. See his comments at *PSP,* 490, where he cites *MS* 18.5.

27. Gimello 1976a, 8–9.

28. This synopsis of Gudmunsen's argument parallels the one offered in Huntington 1983a.

29. Gudmunsen 1977, 8.

30. Ibid.

31. See Ruegg 1981, 4–5 n. 11, on the problem of dating Nāgārjuna.

32. Ibid., 6.

33. The small amount of biographical information is discussed in Walleser 1922 and Murti 1960, 88–91. See the reference to Ruegg in n. 31 above for other available sources.

34. See in particular Huntington 1986 for an edition and text-critical study of the *Akutobhayā*.

35. On the date of Āryadeva, see Lamotte 1944–1980, 3:1373. For general information on his life and writings, see Ruegg 1981, 50–54, and May 1979, 479ff.

36. Ruegg 1981, 54–56.

37. Ibid., 60.

38. See Saitō 1984 for an edition and partial English translation of this text.

39. Cf. Obermiller 1931–1932, 135. The immensely influential taxonomic labels *thal 'gyur ba (prāsaṅgika)* and *rang rgyud pa (svātantrika)* probably originated in the writings of Pa tshab Nyi ma grags (see Mimaki 1982, 45).

40. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 197.

41. Ruegg 1981, 71 n. 228.

42. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970, 206.

43. Ibid. Could this explain the lack of interest in Candrakīrti's writings on the part of the Chinese? In fairness to him, see *MAB,* 218 (translated in part 2, note to 6.108).

44. Cf. Ruegg 1971, 453 n. 25. The positing of tantric masters supposed to be identical with early Indian teachers is quite common in late Indian and Tibetan Buddhist literature.

45. The most comprehensive bibliography of Candrakīrti's works appears in Lindtner 1979, 87–90.

46. There is good reason to suspect that the tantric texts are mistakenly attributed to the Candrakīrti who wrote *MAB, PSP,* and so forth: cf. Lindtner 1979, 87 n. 12.

47. Ruegg 1981, 61; and May 1979, 482.

48. For studies of Bhāvaviveka and his philosophy, see Lopez 1987, Iida 1980, and Ruegg 1981, 61–63. Kajiyama 1957 presents an interesting analysis of the Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika debate. Also see Mookerjee 1975 for a discussion of the *prasaṅga* technique and its historical roots as a rhetorical device.

49. From the time of Bhāvaviveka on, the Mādhyamika became more and more preoccupied with logical and epistemological problems and much less concerned with pragmatics (cf. Ruegg 1983, 239).

50. See *PSP,* 16: *na ca mādhyamikasya svataḥ svatantram anumānaṁ kartuṁ yuktaṁ pakṣāntarābhyupagamābhāvāt /* (It is not suitable for a Mādhyamika, because he does not accept the premises of his opponent, to present his own independently valid inferential judgment.)

51. Cf. §1, n. 11, above.

52. See §3.4: "Major philosophical themes of *The Entry into the Middle Way.*"

53. Modern Western scholars who see the Mādhyamika as mysticism rather than philosophy are similar in this regard to Bhāvaviveka. Cf. Betty 1983.

54. *PSP,* 24: *na hi śabdā dāṇḍapāśikā iva vaktāram asvatantrayanti / kiṁ tarhi satyāṁ śaktau vaktur vivakṣām anuvidhīyante / tataś ca parapratijñāpratiṣedhamātraphalatvāt prasaṅgāpādanasya nāsti prasaṅgaviparītārthāpattiḥ /*

55. See Ruegg 1981, 1–3, on the name "Madhyamaka" (Mādhyamika).

56. *V* 1, 10–17 (I. B. Horner's translation).

57. *SN* 3, 134.30–135.19; and *SN* 2, 17.8–30.

58. *PSP*, 269.11.

59. *V*1, 10.18–20.

60. *V*1, 10.36–37.

61. *MS* 18.6: *ātmety api prajñapitam anātmety api deśitaṁ / buddhair nātmā na cānātmā kaścid ity api deśitaṁ //*

62. Cf. *MS* 22 and, in particular, 25.24cd: *na kva cit kasya cit kaś cid dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ /* (The buddha did not teach anything to anyone at any place.) Also see n. 65, below.

63. Tenzin Gyatso 1975, 62–63.

64. Candrakīrti discusses this distinction at length in *PSP*, 41–44.

65. *MS* 25.18: *tiṣṭhamāno 'pi bhagavān bhavatīty eva nohyate / na bhavaty ubhayaṁ ceti nobhayaṁ ceti nohyate //* (Even though he is present, it is not said that the buddha exists, that he does not exist, that he both exists and does not exist, or that he neither exists nor does not exist.)

66. Wittgenstein 1953, §304. Cf. *RV* 2.4, Candrakīrti's insistence that the Mādhyamika is not compelled to accept the antithesis of his opponent's view and my own reluctance to call Murti's concept of a "subjacent ground" wrong.

67. Cf. *RV* 1.98: *ajñānakalpitaṁ pūrvaṁ paścāt tattvārthanirṇaye / yadā na labhate bhāvam evābhāvas tadā kuha //* (What was previously conceived through spiritual ignorance is subsequently discerned as the meaning of reality: When a thing is not found, how can there be a nothing?); and *VV* 43ab: *pratiṣedhayāmi nāhaṁ kiṁcit pratiṣedhyam asti na ca kiṁcit /* (I do not negate anything, nor is there anything to negate.)

68. Here is the crux of the difference between the Mādhyamika and modern Western philosophers like Wittgenstein and Rorty, who have not pursued their work in soteriological dimensions.

69. Cf. *MS* 22.11: *śūnyam iti na vaktavyam aśūnyam iti vā bhavet / ubhayaṁ nobhayaṁ ceti prajñapty arthaṁ tu kathyate //* (Nothing is to be called empty or not empty, nor is anything to be called both empty and not empty, or neither empty nor not empty: [the word emptiness] is, however, used in conversation as a conventional designation.) And, like all conventional designations, emptiness finds its meaning in its ability to accomplish a specific purpose defined in the speaker's intention (see *PSP*, 24), a purpose which is explained in *MS* 24.10: *vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate / paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇaṁ nādhigamyate //* (The [truth of the] highest meaning cannot be taught without relying on conventional practice, and without having appreciated the [truth of the] highest meaning, one will not realize nirvāṇa.)

70. May 1979, 474: That is—*pace* May: "its highest, soteriological value." I think it would be a serious mistake to read the Mādhyamika as saying that, e.g., water is not valuable for quenching thirst.

71. Cf. *MS* 25.19: *na saṁsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṁ cid asti viśeṣaṇaṁ / na nirvāṇasya saṁsārāt kiṁ cid asti viśeṣaṇaṁ //* (The everyday world is not the slightest bit different from nirvāṇa, nor is nirvāṇa the slightest bit different from the everyday world.) In Ch'an and Zen, the Chinese, and later the Japanese, developed a particularly forceful interpretation of this element of Nāgārjuna's thought.

72. *PSP*, 504: *cakrādīny upādāya rathāṅgāni rathaḥ prajñapyate / tasya yā svāṅgāny upādāya prajñaptiḥ sā svabhāvenānutpattiḥ yā ca svabhāve[n]ānutpattiḥ sā śūnyatā /*

/ saiva svabhāvānutpattilakṣaṇā śūnyatā madhyamā pratipad iti vyavasthāpyate / yasya hi svabhāvenānutpattis tasyāstitvābhāvaḥ svabhāvena cānutpannasya vigamābhāvān nāstitvābhāva iti / ato bhāvābhāvāntadvayarahitatvāt sarvasvabhāvānutpattilakṣaṇā śūnyatā madhyamā pratipan madhyamo mārga ity ucyate // tad evaṁ pratītyasamutpādasyaivaitā viśeṣasaṁjñāḥ śūnyatā upādāya prajñaptir madhyamā pratipad iti //

73. R. Taylor 1967, 66. Nāgārjuna recognizes the same problem in *MS* 20.20: *ekatve phalahetvoḥ syād aikyaṁ janakajanyayoḥ / pṛthaktve phalahetvoḥ syāt tulyo hetur ahetunā //* (If cause and effect were identical, then producer and produced would be the same; if cause and effect were different, then a cause would be equivalent to a noncause.)

74. *MA* 6.168ab: */ gal te rgyu yis bskyed par bya skyed de lta na de rgyu yin zhing / / gal te 'bras bu mi skyed na ni de med rgyu med can du 'gyur /*

75. *Hetoḥ phalasya caikatvaṁ na hi jātūpapadyate / hetoḥ phalasya cānyatvaṁ na hi jātūpapadyate //*

76. *MA* 6.170ab: */ gang phyir 'di dag gnyis char yang ni sgyu ma dang 'dra de yi phyir // bdag la skyon du mi 'gyur 'jig rten pa yi dngos po rnams kyang yod /* and 159d: */ 'jig rten grags pa'i kun rdzob ma brlag cig /*

77. A. E. Taylor 1903, 167.

78. James 1963, 135.

79. Ibid., 138.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., 138–139.

82. Tenzin Gyatso 1975, 70.

83. *MS* 10.16: *ātmanaś ca satattvaṁ ye bhāvānāṁ ca pṛthak pṛthak / nirdiśanti na tān manye śāsanasyārthakovidān //* Nor, or course, is one therefore to jump to the conclusion that the "I" and objective things lack individualized reality. Cf. the formula for the *catuṣkoṭi.*

84. Cf. *MA* 6.78cd: "All the ordered structure of everyday experience is laid waste by this clinging to a real substance inherent in our opponents' philosophical views." In his commentary to this verse (*MAB,* 174) Candrakīrti writes: *'jig rten ba'i rnam par bzhag pa 'jig rten kho na las grub pa / . . . de ltar slob dpon phyin ci log las rang gi rnam par rtog pas sbyar ba'i lugs kyi lam kho nar zhugs pa /* (The ordered structure of everyday experience is only established on the basis of this same everyday experience. . . . Those scholars [who posit a transcendental ground] have wandered down the path of a philosophical system created out of their own erroneous reified concepts.)

85. Feyerabend 1975, 73.

86. Ibid., 76.

87. Wittgenstein 1953, §133.

88. *MA* 6.110a–c: */ de nyid du 'di ji ltar skye med kyang //* [*mo gsham bu ltar*] *gang phyir 'jig rten gyi // mthong ba'i yul du mi 'gyur ma yin pa /*

89. *MA* 6.112a–c: */ de phyir 'di ltar ston pas chos rnams kun // gdod nas zhi zhing skye bral rang bzhin gyis // yongs su mya ngan 'das pa gsungs gyur pa /*

90. *MA* 6.118ab: */ bstan bcos las dpyad rtsod la chags pa'i phyir // ma mdzad rnam grol phyir ni de nyid bstan /*

91. *MV,* 1.23.

92. Cf. Huntington 1983b, §4, "The ambivalent meaning of the term *svabhāva.*"

93. *PSP,* 265: *sarvadānutpāda eva hy agnyādīnāṁ paranirapekṣatvād akṛtrimatvāt svabhāva ity ucyate //*

94. Cf. *MA* 6.168.

95. Cf. *MA* 6.117.

96. Cf. *MA* 6.25a–c: */ gnod pa med pa'i dbang po drug rnams kyis // bzung ba gang zhig 'jig rten gyis rtogs te // 'jig rten nyid las bden yin . . .* (Understanding based on apprehension by any of the six unimpaired faculties is true by the standard of everyday experience.) The sixth faculty is mind, with concepts as its objective referents.

97. Cf. *MA* 6.81cd: */ 'bras phyir 'di dag med kyang yod do zhes // 'jig rten ngor byas bdag ni smra bar byed /* (With reference to the nature of everyday experience, we say: "Even though things do not exist, they exist"—and this is done for a specific purpose.) See also 6.166; and *VV* 28: *saṁvyavahāraṁ ca vayaṁ nānabhyupagamya kathayāmaḥ /* (We always speak with reference to everyday practice.) Soteriological truth is not expressed by a special metaphysical language but by using everyday words and expressions in their conventional, pragmatically grounded meanings. Even to say that, from the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning, "nothing exists" is to speak with a purpose in mind, and not with the idea that one's words link up with or point to an objectively present reality defined by these words. Cf. *MS* 24.10cd: *vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate /* (The truth of the highest meaning is taught only by relying on conventional practice.) Emptiness *(śūnyatā)* is itself only a conventional designation *(prajñapti),* its meaning dependent *(upādāya)* on everyday experience (*MS* 24.18).

98. *MAB,* 225: *btags par yod bzhin la sogs pa'i tshogs pa la brten nas me long la gzugs brnyan btags pa tsam dmigs pa dang / btags par yod pa ka ba la sogs pa la brten nas khyim du btags pa nang / de bzhin du shing gi rten can nags btags pa dang ji ltar rmi lam na ma skyes pa'i rang bzhin can gyi sa bon las ma skyes pa'i rang bzhin can kyi myu gu skye bar dmigs pa de bzhin du / dngos po btags par yod pa thams cad kyi btags pa yang dngos po btags par yod pa'i rten can du rigs te /* Cf. *VV* 66: *sa yadi svabhāvataḥ syād grāho na syāt pratītya saṁbhūtaḥ* (If perception were to come about in and of itself, it would not be dependent.)

99. These criteria are not drawn together in this way in any Mādhyamika text that I know. I have inferred them from my study of the levels of *saṁvṛti* (cf. Huntington 1983b, §3.1.3).

100. Tenzin Gyatso 1975, 64.

101. *PSP,* 491 (see above, n. 25). *Prapañca* is actually not confined to conceptual mechanisms. As several modern commentators have noted, Indian texts do not always distinguish clearly between external objects and ideas. Cf. Lindtner 1982, 271 and n. 240, where he mentions in particular *artha* 'object' or 'meaning,' *upalabdhi* 'existent' or 'conceived,' *satya* 'truth' or 'reality,' *sad* 'real' or 'good,' and *prapañca,* which refers both to ontic and to epistemic diffusion—both to the universe as the totality of the contents of perception and to language and conceptual thought. Thus, when conceptual thought becomes confused and diffuse, so does the external world. (The translations here are mine, not Lindtner's.) This ambiguity is graphically represented in the Buddhist doctrine of the six senses and their objects *(āyatanas).* For an extended discussion of *papañca* (= *prapañca*) in the Pāli literature, see Ñāṇananda 1976.

102. Cf. *MAB,* 105–106, and *SN* 2, 95.1–9.

103. Wittgenstein calls it "language on holiday" (1953, §38). Cf. ibid., §132: "The confusions that occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work."

104. *MA* 6.158: */ de ni de nyid du 'am 'jig rten du //* [*rnam pa bdun gyis*] *'grub 'gyur min mod kyi // rnam dpyad med par 'jig rten nyid las 'dir // rang gi yan lag brten nas 'dogs pa yin /*

105. *MA* 6.159ab, d: */ de nyid yan lag can de cha shas can // shing rta de nyid byed po zhes 'gror bsnyad /* [*/ skye bo rnams la len po nyid du'ang grub /*] */ 'jig rten grags pa'i kun rdzob ma brlag cig /*

106. Cf. *PSP,* 24.

107. Terminology of this sort follows directly on the heels of neo-Kantian epistemological distinctions such as subject and object, representation and the real, etc.

108. Cf. my comments on Murti's idealization of the Mādhyamika, above, as well as *RV* 2.4.

109. Here and in the preceding paragraph I have paraphrased the material in *MA* 6.171–176.

110. *VV* 29, commentary: [*tasmāt*] *sarvabhāveṣu śūnyeṣv atyantopaśānteṣu prakṛtiviviktеṣu kutaḥ pratijñā / kutaḥ pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptiḥ / kutaḥ pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptikṛto doṣaḥ /* Cf. ibid., 38–39 and *MS* 7.11, where the same concept of connection is used in a deconstructive analysis of light and darkness. Nāgārjuna was particularly suspicious of any technical use of *prāpti,* as the term had already been used by the Sarvāstivādins as a sort of glue for establishing a necessary connection between dharmas.

111. *MA* 6.120: */ nyon mongs skyon rnams ma lus 'jig tshogs la // lta las byung bar blo yis mthong gyur zhing // bdag ni 'di yi yul du rtogs byas nas // rnal 'byor pa yis bdag ni 'gog par byed /*

112. *MS* 24.14ab: *sarvaṁ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate /*

113. *MA* 6.37: */ dngos po stong po gzugs brnyan la sogs pa // tshogs la bltos rnams ma grags pa yang min // ji ltar der ni gzugs brnyan sogs stong las // shes pa de yi rnam par skye 'gyur ltar /*

114. *MA* 6.38: */ de bzhin dngos po thams cad stong na yang // stong nyid dag las rab tu skye bar 'gyur // bden pa gnyis su'ang rang bzhin med pa'i phyir // de dag rtag pa ma yin chad pa'ang min /*

115. Cf. *PSP,* 24.

116. All of the statements of the Mādhyamika texts are situation-bound teachings. Compare, e.g., *RV* 3.63: */ gang la dug ni phan 'gyur na // de la dug kyang sbyin par bgyi // kha zas mchog kyang mi phan na // de la de ni sbyin mi bgyi /* (Give even poison to those whom it will help, but do not give the best food to those whom it will not help); and 4.94–96: *yathaiva vaiyākaraṇo mātṛkām api pāṭhayet / buddho 'vadat tathā dharmaṁ vineyānāṁ yathākṣamam // keṣāṁ cid avadad dharmaṁ pāpebhyo vinivṛttaye / keṣāṁ cit puṇyasiddhyarthaṁ keṣāṁ cid dvayaniśritam // dvayāniśritam ekeṣāṁ gambhīraṁ bhīrubhīṣaṇam / śūnyatākaruṇāgarbham ekeṣāṁ bodhisādhanam //* (Just as a grammarian would teach even the alphabet, so the buddha taught the Dharma to his disciples according to the dictates of the particular situation. To some he taught a doctrine that would discourage sinning; to some,

a doctrine to aid in earning merit; and to some, a doctrine based on duality. To some he taught a doctrine not based on duality, a means to attain awakening, profound and frightening, the source of emptiness and compassion.) Also *CS* 8.20: *sad asat sadasac ceti nobhayaṁ ceti kathyate / nanu vyādhivaśāt sarvam auṣadhaṁ nāma jāyate //* ([The buddha's teachings] mention the existent, the nonexistent, the existent-and-nonexistent, and what is neither. Everything whatsoever becomes medicine on account of [the various] diseases [that must be treated].)

117. Death is the paradigm of unforeseen change, and therefore meditation on death is considered to be the single most valuable spiritual practice.

118. See *VV* 29, commentary, discussed at n. 110, above.

119. *PSP,* 248–249, where Candrakīrti quotes from the *Ratnakūṭasūtra. Upalambha* is the mental component of perception, the mental image that corresponds with the sensory impression. The point here is that the word *emptiness* does not derive its meaning from the interaction between a mental image and its objective referent.

120. *TKP,* 139.13–140.1, in particular: *rtog pas bzhag pa de la rang rang gi bya byed 'thad pa ni . . . dbu ma'i lta ba mthar thug pa'i dka' sa yang 'di nyid do /* The entire passage is translated and discussed in Huntington 1983a, 331. I have translated *lta ba* here as "philosophy," taking into account the fact that the Tibetan serves as a translation for both *darśana* (as in the present instance) and *dṛṣṭi* (cf. Ruegg 1983, 206).

121. Cf. Matilal 1971, 162–165; Kajiyama 1966, 38–39; and Ruegg 1981, 78ff. and 1983, esp. 225–227.

122. Cf. the citation from Wittgenstein at n. 66 above, and nn. 66 and 67.

123. Cf. *PSP,* 373: *tatra nāsmin parapratyayo 'stīty aparapratyayaṁ paropadeśāgamyaṁ svayam evādhigantavyam ity arthaḥ / yathā hi taimirikā vitathaṁ keśamaśakamakṣikādirūpaṁ paśyanto vitimiropadeśenāpi na śaknuvanti keśānāṁ yathāvad avasthitaṁ svarūpam adarśananyāyenādhigantavyam ataimirikā ivādhigantuṁ kiṁ tarhy ataimirikopadeśān mithyaitad ity etāvanmātrakaṁ eva pratipadyante / yadā tu timiropaghātyaviparītaśūnyatādarśanāñjanāñjitabuddhinayanāḥ santaḥ samutpannatattvajñānā bhavanti tadā tat tattvaṃ anadhigamanayogena svayam adhigacchantīti /* (That reality is "not dependent on anything else" means that it can only be realized personally, and not by relying on instruction from another source. Those with an optical defect see the forms of hairs, flies, gnats, and other such things which are not real, but even with instruction from someone with healthy eyes they are not capable of realizing the intrinsic nature of these hairs—that is, they are incapable of not seeing them as a person with healthy eyes does not see them. Rather, they only reflect, on the basis of instruction from those with healthy eyes, that [the hairs] are illusory. When they are treated with the medicine of direct perception of emptiness, which reverses the damage of their optical defect, and they acquire the eyes of a buddha, then they realize for themselves the reality of [those hairs, etc.]—by nonrealization.) Also *MAB,* 109–110 (translated and discussed in §5.2, below), and *BCA,* 364.

124. See in particular §4.6.2: "The relationship of perfect wisdom to the other perfections."

125. Several of the earliest Yogācāra texts are ascribed to a mysterious Maitreyanātha. An ancient Indian tradition tells us that these texts were dictated to

Asaṅga by the bodhisattva Maitreya, who is responsible for their content. The opinion of modern scholars is divided as to whether or not Maitreya[nātha] is an historical figure (see Willis 1979, 3–12). For information on the various editions and translations of Yogācāra texts, see Conze 1962, 3.3, and the bibliographies in Anacker 1984, Kochumuttom 1982, and Willis 1979. And for a discussion of the historical development of Yogācāra thought, see Frauwallner 1976, 255–407.

126. The Yogācāra doctrine of reflexive awareness is discussed in Mookerjee 1975, 319–336. Candrakīrti devotes quite a few stanzas to criticism of this concept.

127. *DP* 1–2: *manopubbaṅgamā dhammā manoseṭṭhā manomayā, manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsati vā karoti vā tato naṁ dukkham anveti cakkaṁ va vahato padam . . . manasā ce pasannena bhāsati vā karoti vā tato naṁ sukham anveti chāyā va anapāyinī.*

128. *TSN* has been discussed in a number of places. See in particular Kochumuttom 1982, 90–126, and Anacker 1984, 287–298. Scriptural authority for the doctrine is found in *SN,* chaps. 6 and 7 and *LA* §55.

129. *TSN* 37ab: *dvayor anupalambhena dharmadhātūpalambhatā /* and *TSN* 4cd: *tasya kā nāstitā tena yā tatrādvayadharmatā /* (What is it that is brought about by the nonexistence of [duality]?—There is the nondual *dharmatā.*) Cf. *MAB,* 132–133 (translated in part 2, note to 6.43) and ibid., 161–162 (part 2, note to 6.68), where Candrakīrti uses this same expression in a different context.

130. *TSN* 4ab: *tatra kim khyāty asatkalpaḥ katham khyāti dvayātmanā /* and 35a, d: *viruddhadhīkāraṇatvād . . . mokṣāpatter ayatnataḥ /*

131. Ibid., 23a: *kalpito vyavahārātmā* and 33: *dvayasyānupalambhena dvayākāro vigacchati / vigamāt tasya niṣpanno dvayābhāvo 'dhigamyate /*

132. Ibid., 23cd: *vyavahārasamucchedaḥ svabhāvaś cānya iṣyate /*

133. Ibid., 16: *dvayābhāvasvabhāvatvād advayaikasvabhāvataḥ / svabhāvaḥ pariniṣpanno dvayaikatvātmako mataḥ /* and 37: *dvayor anupalambhena dharmadhātūpalambhatā / dharmadhātūpalambhena syād vibhutvopalambhatā /*

134. Ibid., 2: *yat khyāti paratantro 'sau yathā khyāti sa kalpitaḥ / pratyayādhīnavṛttitvāt kalpanāmātrabhāvataḥ /*

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid., 4ab (cf. n. 130, above).

137. Ibid., 5a: *asatkalpo 'tra kaścittam.*

138. *MVK* 1.2: *abhūtaparikalpo 'sti.*

139. *MVKB* 1.2: *tatrābhūtaparikalpo grāhyagrāhakavikalpaḥ /; MVK* 1.2: *dvayam tatra na vidyate /; MVKB* 1.2: *dvayam grāhyam grāhakam ca /* Cf. *TSN* 26: *trayo 'py ete svabhāvā hi advayālambhalakṣaṇāḥ / abhāvād atathābhāvāt tad abhāvasvabhāvataḥ /*

140. *TSN* 27–30: *māyākṛtam mantravaśāt khyāti hastyātmanā yathā / ākāramātraṃ tatrāsti hastī nāsti tu sarvathā // svabhāvaḥ kalpito hastī paratantras tadākṛtiḥ / yas tatra hastyabhāvo 'sau pariniṣpanna iṣyate // asatkalpas tathā khyāti mūlacittād dvayātmanā / dvayam atyantato nāsti tatrāsty ākṛtimātrakam // mantravan mūlavijñānam kāṣṭhavat tathatā matā / hastyākāravad eṣṭavyo vikalpo hastivad dvayam //* (Here and below I use Kochumuttom's translation, with minor alterations.)

141. *TSN* 34: *hastino 'nupalambhaś ca vigamaś ca tadākṛteḥ / upalambhaś ca kāṣṭhasya māyāyāṃ yugapad yathā //*

142. See Kochumuttom 1982, 198–200, where he gives several examples of

such interpretations in the work of A. K. Chatterjee, T. Stcherbatsky, C. D. Sharma, P. T. Raju, and S. N. Dasgupta.

143. Ibid., 118–119. This is not typical of Kochumuttom's approach to the Yogācāra texts, and although I am not convinced of his thesis that "the Yogācāra writings . . . are open to interpretation in terms of realistic pluralism" (p. 6 n. 1, p. 197, and passim), I find his book well researched and written in a clear, engaging style. Compare the introduction to Willis 1979, 1–66, for an alternative to the idealistic interpretation.

144. *PSP*, 248–249, translated and discussed in §3.4.3.

145. *VV* 29 and *MA* 6.171–176.

146. *TSN* 32cd: *upalambhanimittā tu prāptiḥ.*

147. *BB*, 47.22–25: *atas tad rūpādi-saṁjñakaṁ vastu[tena rūp'ādi-saṁjñakena] prajñapti-vād'ātmanā śūnyaṁ. kiṁ punaḥ tatra rūp'ādi-saṁjñake vastuny avaśiṣṭaṁ. yad uta tad eva rūpam ity evam-ādi-prajñapti-vād'āśrayaḥ.*

148. Ibid., 47.25–48.2: *tac cobhayaṁ yathābhūtaṁ prajānāti yad uta vastumātraṁ ca vidyamānaṁ vastu-mātre ca prajñapti-mātraṁ.*

149. Ibid., 47.16–19: *kathaṁ ca punaḥ su-gṛhītā śūnyatā bhavati . . . yat punar atrāvaśiṣṭaṁ bhavati. tat sad ihāstīti yathābhūtaṁ prajānāti.*

150. Willis 1979, 56 n. 64.

151. *MS* 22.11: See n. 69, above. Unfortunately, the gerundive/passive construction loses much of its original force in English translation.

152. *PSP*, 444–445: *sarvam etan na vaktavyam asmābhiḥ // kiṁ tvan ukte yathāvad avasthitaṁ svabhāvaṁ pratipattā* (?) *pratipattuṁ na samartha iti / ato vayam apy āropato vyavahārasatya eva sthitvā vyavahārārthaṁ vineyajanānurodhena śūnnyam ity api brūmaḥ / aśūnyam ity api śūnyāśūnyam ity api naiva śūnyaṁ nāśūnyam ity api brūmaḥ / . . . na śūnyaṁ nāpi cāśūnyaṁ tasmāt sarvaṁ vidhīyate / sattvād asattvāc ca madhyamā pratipac cà sā // iti /*

153. *RV* 2.4: *dṛṣṭaśrutādyaṁ muninā na satyaṁ na mṛṣoditam / pakṣād dhi pratipakṣaḥ syād ubhayaṁ tac ca nārthataḥ //* This is a clear statement of the Mādhyamika's attitude toward all philosophical views.

154. Cf. *MA* 6.94.

155. *MA* 6.86d: */ rgyal bas sems tsam 'jig rten byed por gsungs /*

156. *MA* 6.90: */ gal te gzugs yod mod kyi de la ni // sems bzhin byed pa po nyid yod ma yin // des na sems las gzhan pa'i byed pa po // bzlog gi gzugs ni bkag pa ma yin no /*

157. *MA* 6.92ab: */ gzugs med na ni sems yod ma 'dzin zhig // sems yod nyid na'ang gzugs med ma 'dzin zhig /*

158. *MA* 6.81: */ ji ltar khyod kyis gzhan dbang dngos 'dod ltar // kun rdzob kyang ni bdag gis khas ma blangs // 'bras phyir 'di dag med kyang yod do zhes // 'jig rten ngor byas bdag ni smra bar byed /*

159. *MAB*, 179: */ ji ltar khyod kyi rang dbang du gnas nas / rang gi gzhung lugs kyis gzhan gyi dbang gi ngo bo 'phags pa'i ye shes kyis thugs su chud par bya ba zhig smra ba de ltar ni kho bos kun rdzob pa ma yin te / 'o na ci zhe na / yod pa ma yin yang 'jig rten kho na la grags par gyur pas yod do zhes 'jig rten gyi ngo bo kho nar brjod pa yin te / de rjes su brjod pa ni de ldog pa'i thabs yin pa'i phyir ro // ji skad du / bcom ldan 'das kyis 'jig rten nga dang lhan cig rtsod kyi / nga ni 'jig rten dang mi rtsod de / gang 'jig rten na yod par 'dod pa de ni ngas kyang yod par bzhed do // gang 'jig rten na med par 'dod pa de ni nga*

yang med par bzhed do zhes gsungs pa lta bu'o / Candrakīrti is quoting *SN* 22, 64.103; cf. also *PSP*, 370.

SECTION FOUR

1. The dates here are proposed by May (1979, 483). Śāntideva's biography was written by Pezzali (1968) and reviewed by Jong (1975). His most famous work, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* was translated into English by Matics (1970) and by Bachelor (1979). See the "Liste des sources indiennes" in Mimaki 1982 for other translations. Śāntideva's other main composition, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya (ŚS),* was translated into English by Bendall and Rouse (1922).
2. *BCA* 7.25.
3. *ŚS,* 16.6–7.
4. *MPPS* 644c; cf. Ramanan 1966, 97.
5. *MPPS* 63c; translated in Ramanan 1966, 132.
6. *ŚS,* 22.26.
7. *BB,* 140.
8. *ŚS,* 66.27–30.
9. *BB,* 189.
10. *ŚS,* 104.10.
11. *DB,* 60, 64; *ŚS,* 212; *BB,* 20.
12. *MSA,* 49.
13. Ibid., 68.
14. See part 2, 3.12, n. 7, for the three bodies of a buddha.
15. *BB,* 200ff.
16. *BCA* 7.2.
17. *BCA* 7.49.
18. Cf. Dhargyey 1974, 46–48.
19. Ibid., 47.
20. Ibid.
21. *AK* 6.29.
22. Horner 1954, 301.
23. *BCA* 5.4–6.
24. *ŚS,* 68.25–26.
25. *BB,* 109.11–17.
26. Sometimes translated "discernment."
27. Gimello 1976a, 33.
28. Feyerabend 1975, 168.
29. Ibid., 72.
30. Gimello 1976b, 132–133; cf. idem 1976a, 34–35. Italics are mine.
31. *VM* 14. Also cf. Nyanatiloka 1972, 122.
32. *BB,* 109.18–22.
33. The conceptual scheme behind this use of meditation and the other perfections is discussed in greater detail below in §5.
34. *ŚS,* 67.24.
35. Ibid., 67.22.

36. Ñanamoli 1976, 8 (*VM* 1.19).

37. This is a paraphrase of *VM* 1.20; cf. Ñanamoli 1976, 8, for the entire section in translation.

38. Cf. Ñanamoli 1976, 84 (*VM* 3.2) and 91 (*VM* 3.8): "[Concentration] should be developed by one who has taken his stand on virtue that has been purified by means of the special qualities of fewness of wishes, etc. and perfected by observance of the ascetic practices."

39. Ibid., 84–86, and esp. *VM* 3.6.

40. *A* 4, 203; *U,* 56; *V* 2, 239.

41. Ñanamoli 1976, 479–481.

42. Cf. *VM* 14.4, and Ñanamoli 1976, 480.

43. Dhargyey 1974, 168–169.

44. Becker 1973, 87.

45. *BCA* 9.1.

46. See part 2, 1.16, n. 20 for this threefold emptiness.

47. See part 2, 3.12, n. 7.

48. From here to the end of this section, my discussion follows Prajñākaramati's commentary on *BCA* 9.1 (= pp. 349–351).

49. *BCA,* 349.

50. *MV* 1, 7.14.

51. *AK* 6.3, p. 326.13–16.

52. Becker 1973, 282–283.

53. Cf. *MA* 6.78. My account of these "extreme views" owes much to the discussion in Ramanan 1966, 151ff.

54. Whitehead, among others, has written on the problems created by naive and total reliance on logic as the sole arbiter of truth: "Sharp cut scientific classifications are essential for scientific method, but they are dangerous for philosophy, because such classification hides the truth that the different modes of natural existence shade off into each other" (Whitehead 1938, lecture 8, "Nature Alive").

55. *CS* 16.25, as cited in *PSP,* 16: *sad asat sadasac ceti yasya pakṣo na vidyate / upālambhaś cireṇāpi tasya vaktuṁ na śakyate //* Cf. also May 1978, 239: "Just as empty things only can act as causes, because if they are not empty they are self-contained and consequently have neither ground nor power to produce any effect, just so a non-empty word would be self-contained and consequently totally devoid of application and inefficient and useless as philosophy."

56. *MAB,* 298–299; cf. also *RV* 2.4.

57. On the various numbers and types of these illustrations, see Murti 1960, 160 n. 1, and the relevant appendix; Conze 1975, 144; Lamotte 1944–1980, 2028ff. and 2045; and Tauscher 1981, 18–26. The pedagogical intention of these is indicated by *MA* 6.186cd.

58. For a discussion of the problem of the "original" six perfections, see Warder 1970, 357ff.; and Dayal 1932, 167ff. Dayal considers the last three perfections superfluous (269), but it is not clear why.

59. Without having first divested oneself of reified concepts it is not possible to act in harmony with any situation, since, from the Buddhist perspective, these misconceptions and the afflictions associated with them result in a radi-

cally misleading situation. As Conze has written, "The reader should always bear in mind that false views are not merely wrong knowledge, but wrong knowledge on the part of a viewer who is in a false position and surrounded by distorted objects" (1967, 234).

60. Cf., e.g., *BCA* 5.99.
61. *ŚS,* 15.12–15.
62. See part 2, 6.211, n. 218.
63. *BB,* 43.1–22.
64. Evans-Wentz 1951, 271.
65. *ŚS,* 15.12–15.
66. Cf. Dayal 1932, 148ff.
67. *DB,* 49.8–9.
68. Ibid., 52–53.
69. Ibid., 55.22–23.
70. It is difficult to distinguish clearly between the concepts *jñāna* and *prajñā* primarily because there seems to be some ambiguity in the use of these terms in the Mahāyāna literature (see, e.g., *LA,* §66). Many modern Western scholars are content to identify the two of them (e.g., Dayal 1932, 269). Lindtner 1982, 268ff., gives a more sensitive analysis, with useful references. Guenther 1958, 20 n. 9, offers a dissenting opinion and an interesting discussion of alternative meanings of the word *jñāna* in Buddhist philosophy.

SECTION FIVE

1. Cf. §4.6.3: "Candrakīrti's presentation of the Sixth Stage."
2. Feyerabend 1975, 31–32.
3. *VV* 29; see also *VV* 43 and *RV* 1.98, discussed in §3.1.
4. Feyerabend 1975, 32.
5. Ibid., n. 23. Study of the Mādhyamika may provide new responses to Putnam, Davidson, and other critics of incommensurability. See Feyerabend 1987 for a continuing discussion of the problems.
6. *MA* 6.30–31; also cf. Kuhn 1962, 111.
7. Cf. *VV* 30–49.
8. *VV* 30.
9. Cf., for example, *MA* 6.80ab: */ tha snyad bden pa thabs su gyur pa dang / don dam bden pa thabs byung gyur pa ste /* (Conventional truth is the means, the truth of the highest meaning is the goal); also 6.78cd and 158–159; and *MS* 24.10, 36.
10. *PSP,* 10–11: *tad evaṁ hetupratyayāpekṣaṁ bhāvānām utpādaṁ paridīpayatā bhagavatā ahetvekahetuviṣamahetusaṁbhūtatvaṁ svaparobhayakṛtatvaṁ ca bhāvānāṁ niṣiddhaṁ bhavati / tan niṣedhāc ca sāṁvṛtānāṁ padārthānāṁ yathāvasthitaṁ sāṁvṛtaṁ svarūpam udbhāvitaṁ bhavati / sa evedānīṁ sāṁvṛtaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ svabhāvenānutpannatvād / āryajñānāpekṣayā nāsmin nirodho vidyate / yāvan nāsmin nirgamo vidyate . . .*
11. *MAB,* 109–110; cf. *BCA,* 364. Also see §3, n. 123.
12. Cf. Rorty 1979, 325: "In order to guard against the confusions of traditional empiricism, we need make no more of the gestalt-switch in question

[from Aristotle's 'constrained fall' to Galileo's 'pendulum'] than the fact that people became able to respond to sensory stimulations by remarks about pendulums, without having to make an intervening inference."

13. Cf. *MS* 14.7 and §3.1: "Sources for the study of Mādhyamika thought."

14. Thurman 1980, 327.

15. See the citation from Cavell in §1, at n. 17.

16. *MA* 11, epilogue, v. 4. "Previous cultivation" (Tib. *sngon goms;* Skt. *pūrvabhāvanā*) refers first to "the wisdom composed of meditative cultivation" *(bhāvanāmayī-prajñā),* and secondarily to practice of the other perfections.

17. Bateson 1980, 232.

18. *MS* 25.19: *na saṁsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṁ cid asti viśeṣaṇaṁ / na nirvāṇasya saṁsārāt kiṁ cid asti viśeṣaṇaṁ //*

19. Cf. §1, n. 24.

20. Cf. Rorty 1979, 8–9: "It is the notion that human activity (and inquiry, the search for knowledge, in particular) takes place within a framework which can be isolated prior to the conclusion of inquiry—a set of presuppositions discoverable a priori—which links contemporary philosophy to the Descartes-Locke-Kant tradition."

21. Cf. once again *PSP,* 24, cited at the close of §3.2.

22. Compare *VV* 29, where Nāgārjuna denies the possibility of any fallacy accruing to his arguments, because he has no proposition.

23. *MA* 6.35: */ gang phyir dngos po 'di dag rnam dpyad na // de nyid bdag can dngos las tshu rol tu // gnas rnyed ma yin de phyir 'jig rten gyi // tha snyad bden la rnam bar dpyad mi bya /* See the accompanying note to this verse and to 6.158.

24. *MA* 6.112a–c: */ de phyir 'di ltar ston pas chos rnams kun // gdod nas zhi zhing skye bral rang bzhin gyis // yongs su mya ngan 'das pa gsungs gyur pa /*

25. *VP,* §3, pp. 28–29.

26. In this area we can expect to learn much from the work of later Indian and Tibetan philosophers who strove to integrate the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika so as to recognize and reflect the centrality of this interaction between consciousness and its objects. Owen Barfield provides an interesting discussion of this and related issues from a non-Buddhist perspective (see the bibliography).

27. Cf. *MS* 24.14ab: "One who is in harmony with emptiness is in harmony with all things."

28. Rorty 1979, 12; also cf. his chap. 8 on the distinction between "edifying" and "systematic" philosophy.

29. Cf. *BCA,* chap. 9, where Śāntideva describes his concept of "the sameness of self and other" *(parātmasamatā),* which forms the theoretical foundation for a meditation practice called "the substitution of one's self for another" *(parātmaparivartanā).*

30. Cavell 1966, 167 n.

31. Betty 1983, 134.

32. Ibid., 131.

33. The mystical interpretation of the Mādhyamika is closely aligned with references to an ineffable dimension. Cf. §3, n. 12.

34. Rorty 1981, 165.

35. *MS* 24.7: *atra brūmaḥ śūnyatāyām na tvaṁ vetsi prayojanaṁ / . . . tataḥ evaṁ vihanyase /*

36. Wittgenstein 1965, 28.

37. Gouldner 1973, 2.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 3. Cf. my discussion of the Prāsaṅgika-Svātantrika debate above in §3.2.

40. Gouldner 1973, 10–11.

41. Rorty 1979, 361.

42. *MS* 15.6: *svabhāvaṁ parabhāvaṁ ca bhāvaṁ cābhāvam eva ca / ye paśyanti na paśyanti te tattvaṁ buddhaśāsane //*

43. The same kind of complexity and tension is present in the *advaitavedānta* of Śaṅkarācārya and his followers. Early medieval Indian philosophers had clearly begun to sense that talk of an absolute in rationalist or idealist terms was soteriologically ineffective. In the modern West, a growing disillusionment with neo-Kantian scientific rationalism has made the use of this vocabulary similarly inefficacious.

44. M. C. Taylor 1978, 53–54.

45. Ibid., 45.

46. Ibid.

47. Cf. *MA* 6.186 and *MS* 22.11.

48. The charge of relativism is brought against the Prāsaṅgika in *MA* 6.171.

49. The attempt to escape these charges by retreating into a mystical interpretation has already been discussed above.

50. Rorty 1982, 168.

51. Ibid., 171–173.

52. Rorty 1979, 346.

53. Gadamer 1976, 101.

54. Ibid., 121.

55. See Jong's remarks, cited above in §1.

56. Rorty 1979, 371–372. The Mādhyamika, of course, reduces this claim as well to emptiness: The meditator sees the intrinsic nature of things "as it is" by not seeing it (cf. §3, n. 123).

57. *RV* 4.94–96 (see §3, n. 116).

58. Hamilton 1950, 151.

59. *Twilight of the Idols:* translated in Kaufmann 1968, 482–483.

60. Gadamer 1988, 244.

61. Culler 1983, 150–151.

62. Ibid., 149.

63. Becker 1973, 189.

64. Ibid., 202.

65. *PV,* 260–261. Cf. the note to 6.173.

STAGE ONE

1. In *MPPS,* the śrāvaka (hearer) is identified by five primary characteristics [Ramanan (1966), pp. 288 ff.]: (1) distaste for the world, (2) constant thought

of liberation for himself alone, (3) renunciation of the world, (4) extinction of the mental afflictions, and (5) eventual attainment of escape from fear and suffering. When he learns of the emptiness of the self and hears the four noble truths, the śrāvaka feels contempt for old age, disease, and death, and he follows a path of aversion leading toward escape from his own suffering. He seizes on the teaching of impermanence as an objective, ultimate truth and fails to penetrate to the soteriological truth of emptiness revealed in the scriptures of the *Prajñāpāramitā* and the Mādhyamika treatises. The pratyekabuddha (solitary buddha), referred to here as the "middling buddha," differs from the śrāvaka insofar as his understanding of emptiness is greater, though it is still meager in comparison with the nondualistic knowledge of a fully awakened buddha (cf. *TKP,* 7). Also, his merit is less, and he is born only during an epoch when there is no incarnate buddha (*MS* 18.12). Both the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha are followers of the Hīnayāna. They contrast with the Mahāyānists in their lack of universal compassion and in their failure to develop skillful means, yet they can enter the bodhisattva path by deepening their appreciation of emptiness.

2. "Knowledge" (Tib. *blo;* Skt. *mati, buddhi,* or *jñāna*) could also be translated as "intelligence," but in any case the reference to *advayajñāna* is clear.

3. Candrakīrti mentions three types of compassion (*MAB,* 10): (1) compassion which has for its object all sentient beings; (2) compassion which has for its object all sentient and insentient beings; and (3) compassion devoid of object. This last type is alluded to in *MA* 1.4.

4. Cf. *TKP,* 19: "Like buckets traveling round and round on a paddlewheel, so sentient beings wander without self-determination back and forth between the highest heaven and the lowest hell." The generation of the thought of awakening represents striving for freedom from bondage to volitional action *(karma).*

5. "Grows" (Tib. *rab bsngos;* Skt. *pariṇāmita)* is also used as a technical term referring to the transfer of merit.

6. Tib. *kun tu bzang po'i smon pa;* Skt. *samantabhadrapraṇidhāna:* This must be read as a reference to the vow taken by the bodhisattva Samantabhadra in the presence of the buddha. The description of this vow, given in *SP,* chap. 26, enumerates the ways in which the bodhisattva resolves to serve for the good of all living beings.

7. *Tathā coktaṁ candrakīrtinā: jātaḥ kule bhavati caiṣa tathāgatānāṁ saṁyojanatrayam api kṣatám asya sarvam / modaṁ bibharti ca paraṁ sa hi bodhisattvaḥ syāl lokadhātuśatake parijātaśaktiḥ //* (See La Vallée Poussin 1907, 264 n. 2, where this Sanskrit is cited from a commentary on the *Nāmasaṁgīti.*)

8. "Tathāgata" (Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa*) is an epithet commonly applied to any buddha, meaning "thus come" or "thus gone." It can be understood as a reference to the doctrine that all buddhas travel the same path to awakening. For the Mādhyamika, "tathāgata" refers to the harmony between the buddha and the "thusness" or "suchness" of the world. Cf. *MS* 22.16: "The intrinsic nature of the tathāgata is the same as that of the world: just as the tathāgata is devoid of intrinsic being, so is the world"; *AS,* 154.18–19: "This is the thusness through which the bodhisattva, the Great Being, comes to absolute realization in perfect and unsurpassable awakening, and thereby obtains the title 'tathāgata.' "

9. Tib. *kun tu sbyor ba;* Skt. *saṁyojana:* These are: (1) attachment to philosoph-

ical views (Tib. *lta ba mchog 'dzin;* Skt. *dṛṣṭiparāmarśa*); (2) attachment to conventional standards of morality, custom, and ritual practices (Tib. *tshul khrims brtul zhugs mchog 'dzin;* Skt. *śīlavrataparāmarśa*); (3) doubt or confusion about the possibility of attaining awakening (Tib. *the tshom;* Skt. *vicikitsā*).

10. The Tibetan *gyo bar nus par gyur ba* is quite clear in itself, but it does not seem to concur with the Sanskrit *parijātaśaktiḥ*. The Sanskrit, however, is obscure, and there is no adequate evidence about its meaning or the reason for the Tibetan translation.

11. During the first stage (cf. *TKP*, 40).

12. A "bad migration" (Tib. *ngan 'gro;* Skt. *durgati*) includes birth in any of the hell regions and birth as an animal or a hungry ghost *(preta)*. Bad migrations are also realms of experience accessible through meditation as well as states of mind occurring spontaneously when the requisite conditions are present. With reference to this last aspect in relation to all six realms of saṁsāra, cf. Conze 1962, 256: "One and the same object, say a river, leads to a transformation of inward thought, a 'pure fantasy' as we might say, and that for all practical purposes the external object does not exist. The hungry ghosts, by way of retribution of their past deeds, see nothing but pus, urine and excrement; the fishes find there a home; men see fresh and pure water which can be used for washing and drinking; and the gods of the station of infinite space see only space."

13. Tib. *'phags pa brgyad pa;* Skt. *aṣṭamaka ārya:* Both Candrakīrti (*MAB*, 17) and Tsong kha pa (*TKP*, 41) identify this as a reference to the *śrotāpanna* (stream enterer), who would normally be assigned the first (lowest) rank in the series of *āryapudgalas*, or Buddhist saints.

14. Cf. *PSP*, 353: (*MA* 1.8d) *dūraṅgamāyāṁ tu dhīyādhikaḥ /*

15. The reference here is to several *Jātaka* tales, stories of the buddha's previous incarnations, when on occasion he is said to have sacrificed even his own flesh as an act of generosity. Candrakīrti explains this passage in *MAB*, 24, by pointing out that just as one infers fire from smoke, so the bodhisattva's insight into the emptiness of all things can be inferred from his generosity.

16. An "object of pleasure" (Skt. *bhoga*) is food or material property of any kind, or anything that can be possessed and enjoyed.

17. Here and in 1.7 we have followed the translation suggested by La Vallée Poussin. The idea expressed in this verse is that by giving offerings to Buddhist monks, the donor will eventually find a suitable teacher for himself.

18. See *MAB*, 28, where the reference to nirvāṇa is made specific.

19. "Inner (subjective) and outer (objective) possessions" are thoughts, feelings, and concepts, and external objects of all kinds, sentient and insentient.

20. Here is the critical distinction between generosity as a mundane perfection *(laukikā pāramitā)* and generosity practiced as a supramundane perfection *(lokottarā pāramitā)*. Each perfection is divided in this way. For a bodhisattva practicing supramundane generosity, every aspect of the circumstances surrounding the act of giving is perceived in the full context of its active relations. This is technically referred to as *trimaṇḍala-pariśodhana* "purification of the three spheres," which is the recognition that the three aspects of any practice—the actor, the action, and the object or recipient of that action—are interdependent and have no independent meaning or existence *(niḥsvabhāva)*. An attitude of nonclinging is cultivated on the basis of this understanding.

21. "Joy" *(muditā)* is the source from which this first stage takes its name, as the initial phase in the generation of the thought of awakening. Cf. *TKP,* 82: "That thought of the truth of the highest meaning, associated with this first stage, is itself most pure; and the heart (or mind) in which it abides is an excellent receptacle, because just as the moon makes beautiful through its white light the sky which is its receptacle, so this [heart or mind] is made beautiful with the radiant light of wisdom." "Receptacle" *(āśraya)* refers to the intellectual, emotional, and volitional elements of the bodhisattva and to his physical body.

STAGE TWO

1. The "ten paths of pure conduct" involve abstention from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct (three physical acts); lying, causing dissension among others by means of slander, abusive language, and idle or senseless speech (four verbal acts); and covetousness, thoughts of harming others, and attachment to beliefs and philosophical views (three mental acts). Cf. *RV* 1.8–9.

2. Cf. *MAB,* 37: "By 'peace' is meant restraint of the senses *(indriyasaṁvara),* and 'radiant light' means that his body has a luminous appearance." The peace of mind associated with restraint of the senses is considered prerequisite to the practice of meditation at the fifth stage.

3. Cf. *MAB,* 37–38: "In the *Āryaratnakūṭasūtra* [the buddha gave the following teaching to Kāśyapa]: Kāśyapa, if there is any monk practicing morality, bound to regular discipline, whose conduct in religious rites and observances is most distinguished, who sees danger in the smallest faults, who correctly practices the fundamental teachings he has learned, who through purification of the action of body, speech, and mind has completely purified his life, and yet he holds some doctrine of a real self, this, Kāśyapa, is a transgression of the moral code *(vinaya),* and the primary type of hypocrisy among those who are possessed of morality. O Kāśyapa, the rest are as follows: If there is any monk who correctly assumes the twelve practices of an ascetic, and yet he holds some philosophical view of the objective supports [of his practice as possessing independent meaning or existence] and continues seizing at 'I' and 'mine,' this, Kāśyapa, is a transgression of the moral code, and completes the four types of hypocrisy among those who practice morality." Regarding the "objective supports" (Tib. *dmigs pa;* Skt. *ālambana*) of the bodhisattva's practice, cf. *MAB,* 39: "He is without any dualistic thinking about the 'existence' or 'nonexistence,' etc., of the objective supports of his morality: viz., the being with respect to which he abstains [from immoral action], the act [of abstinence], and the actor" (i.e., himself). This same point was made with reference to the practice of generosity (see stage 1, n. 20). Morality is not considered pure, as long as there is any thought of individual gain or loss.

4. Cf. *MAB,* 40: "If he is independent and lives in a divine or human or some such migration like a brave man freed from bondage and living in some agreeable country, and if he does not then take a firm hold of himself, then like a brave man bound and cast over a steep precipice he will fall into a bad migration. Once this has happened, who can pull him up? From then on he will be entrenched in this bad migration where he must suffer injury, and later, if he

should be born among humans, he will have to endure the double ripening [of his immoral behavior]" (i.e., short life and frequent illness). Buddhist teachers continually stress the importance of recognizing the unusual opportunity presented by life as a human being.

5. Tib. *rang byang chub la bdag nyid nges;* Skt. *pratyekabuddhāyātmanīya:* La Vallée Poussin 1907–1911, pt. 1, 289, translates: "les prédestinés à l'illumination des pratyekabuddhas."

6. "Incomparable bliss" *(naiḥśreyasasukha)* or "awakening" *(bodhi)* is realized only when reified thought and the associated mental afflictions end. "Temporary happiness" *(abhyudayasaṁsārasukha)* refers to the enjoyment of privileged birth—that is, birth as either a human being or a god. Birth in divine realms insures continual happiness for the duration of that particular lifespan, until the results of previous volitional action *(karma)* are exhausted. Because in life like this there is no immediate dissatisfaction with circumstances, Buddhist teachers point out that there is also no incentive, and consequently no opportunity, to work toward liberation from the cycle of reified thought, volitional action, and suffering. Even the bliss of the gods is not eternal, though, and reentry into states of misery is only a matter of time: "One person experiences pleasure for hundreds of years during a dream, and then he awakens; another experiences pleasure for a single moment only, then he also awakens. For both of them, when they have awakened, the pleasure is gone, and just this is the similarity, at the time of death, between a person whose life is long and one whose life is short" (*BCA* 6.57–58). The greatest physical suffering in the whole of cyclic existence is said to be inflicted in the lowest realm of hell; but the most acute mental anguish is experienced by the gods of the highest heaven at the moment when it first becomes evident that they will soon fall from what had appeared to be eternal bliss. For this reason, birth as a human being is considered preferable to birth as a god. The human experience of constant vacillation between pain and pleasure provides the impetus to search for a radical solution to the problem of fear and suffering.

7. See *CV,* 301 (Horner's translation): "And the Blessed One said to the Bhikkhus: "There are, O Bhikkhus, in the great ocean, then, eight astonishing and curious qualities, by the constant perception of which the mighty creatures take delight in the great ocean. And what are the eight? . . . O Bhikkhus, the great ocean will not brook association with a dead corpse. Whatsoever dead corpse there be in the sea, that will it—and quickly—draw to the shore, and cast it out on the dry ground. This is the third [of such qualities]." Cf. the third of the eight "marvelous, wonderful things" *(acchariyā abbhutā dhammā)* of the ocean (*A* 4, 197ff; *V* 2, 236ff.; *U* 53ff.): "As the ocean rejects a corpse, so the monkhood rejects evildoers." Tsong kha pa attributes this quality of the ocean to the "extremely pure divine serpents" who live in its waters (*TKP,* 91). Candrakīrti makes no mention of this particular expression in his autocommentary, and La Vallée Poussin 1907–1911, pt. 1, 292, seems to have misunderstood it: "de même qu'il y a incompatibilité entre l'océan et la saveur douce."

8. See above, stage 1, note 20.

9. Cf. *MAB,* 45–46: " 'Immaculate' *(vimalā),* because it is made stainless through the tenfold path of virtuous conduct; this name is in accordance with the meaning attributed to the second stage of the bodhisattva. Just as the

immaculate light from the autumn moon dispels the heat that torments living beings, so this [stage called] 'Immaculate' radiates from that moon which is the bodhisattva and dispels the heat kindled by immorality that burns in [their] hearts. Even though it is not entangled in cyclic existence and so is not worldly, still it is the glory *(śrī)* of the world because all the most excellent qualities are associated with it, and because it engenders the majesty of a sovereign of the four quarters *(cāturdvīpaka-īśvara-saṁpad).*"

STAGE THREE

1. Cf. *TKP,* 92: "Why is it called 'Luminous'? This is in conformity with the symbolic character [of the name], because at the moment that the third stage is attained there appears a light which is capable of stabilizing and tranquilizing all the conceptual diffusion of dualistic appearances—[the light of] the fire of [nondualistic] knowledge which burns away without remainder its fuel, the object[s] of knowledge."

2. Candrakīrti points out (*MAB,* 48) that the bodhisattva's patience is in part based on his understanding of the horrible consequences that such an act of mutilation will bring down upon its perpetrator at some future time.

3. La Vallée Poussin seems to have misinterpreted the *ji ltar gcod* (Skt. *yathā chidyate*) in the second line of this stanza. It is probable that this line must be read in accord with our translation here, that is, as a reference to the "three aspects" of the act of mutilation. This example is often used to illustrate the virtue of patience. (See *BCA,* chap. 6, which contains a number of similar instances of patience.)

4. Any action produces two consequences. The immediate and gross suffering endured in bad migrations is the first and most severe, called the "ripened consequence" *(vipākaphala).* The secondary consequence *(niṣyandaphala)* is manifest in afflictions *(kleśas)* like clinging, antipathy, and so forth, which function as the provocation for acts like the one described above in 3.2. By patiently enduring the suffering of this life (= world), which is the latest and most benign of the *vipākaphala,* a person can finally eradicate the *niṣyandaphala* that would otherwise cause further misery. Cf. *MAB,* 50: "The suffering inflicted on the body by the worst enemies through the use of a razor-sharp blade is the final consequence [of murder]. One who has previously committed the act of murder must [first] suffer the horrible ripened consequence in hell, or under the conditions of an animal birth, or in the realm of Yama. [This ripened consequence] results in the elimination of unpleasant consequences for beings who still must endure the remaining secondary consequences, that is, the mental afflictions. Why should one give way to anger, injuring another being so that this ripened consequence [already being experienced] is transformed all over again into the cause for the appearance of further consequences that in turn result in even greater suffering? It is as though [a patient] were to [transform] the last swallow of medicine intended to cure his sickness [into the cause of a still more serious disease]. Therefore it is only reasonable to exercise extreme patience with the cause of immediate suffering, just as one would behave toward a doctor who resorts to the use of a razor-sharp scalpel in order to cure a disease."

5. The five "higher mental faculties" *(abhijñās)* are listed by Candrakīrti (*MAB,* 56): (1) the ability to perform apparent miracles (Tib. *rdzu 'phrul;* Skt. *ṛddhi:*); (2) the ability to hear sounds outside the range of normal perception (Tib. *lha'i rna ba;* Skt. *divyaśrotra:*); (3) the ability to read the thoughts of others (Tib. *pha rol gyi sems shes pa;* Skt. *paracittajñāna*); (4) the knowledge of former births (Tib. *sngon gyi gnas rjes su drang pa;* Skt. *purvanivāsānusmṛti*); and (5) the ability to see beyond the range of normal vision, as well as to perceive the character and destiny of other beings (Tib. *lha'i mig;* Skt. *divyacakṣus*).

6. *Sugata* 'one who has proceeded well.' Cf. stage 1, n. 8, about tathāgata.

7. Generosity, morality, and patience can all be practiced by laypeople as mundane perfections which will lead to favorable rebirth—ideally, to rebirth under conditions more conducive to the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. As supramundane perfections, however, these same three are the cause of the buddha's "body of form" *(rūpakāya),* which comprises both the "body of bliss" *(sambhogakāya)* and the "body of transformation" *(nirmāṇakāya).* The body of form is distinguished from the "body of the Dharma" *(dharmakāya).* Cf. *MAB,* 62–63: "The provisions *(sambhāras)* which are the cause of buddhahood are twofold: the provision of merit *(puṇya)* and the provision of knowledge *(jñāna).* Here, the provision of merit comprises the first three perfections, and the provision of knowledge is composed of meditation *(dhyāna)* and wisdom *(prajñā).* Energy *(vīrya)* is assigned as a cause of both. In this particular context, the provision of merit is cited as the cause of the body of form possessed by the blessed buddhas, which appears in various marvelous and incomprehensible guises. The body of the Dharma is unproduced, and the cause [of its realization] is the provision of knowledge." This doctrine of the two (or three) bodies of a buddha was taken up by the Yogācāra as an elaboration of an original conception within the Hīnayāna Abhidharma. There, *dharmakāya* referred either to the entire corpus of the teachings in general, or to the buddha himself as a particular embodiment of those teachings. The *dharmakāya* can be understood in this context as the intrinsic nature of all buddhas, in opposition to the particular spatiotemporal manifestation of each individual buddha, which is his *rūpakāya.* The Yogācāra innovation seems to have consisted primarily in giving a metaphysical interpretation to the original doctrine. The *dharmakāya* is, for that school, the eternally present buddha nature, the principle of awakening. The *rūpakāya* is further subdivided into: the *saṁbhogakāya,* a "perfect" form embodying all the characteristics attributed to the buddhas, and enthroned in appropriately splendid surroundings; and the *nirmāṇakāya,* a magical apparition finding its source in the *saṁbhogakāya* and appearing in the world for the edification of all living beings. The "provisions" and their relationship to the bodies of the buddha are discussed in *MA* 11.5–18 and by Nāgārjuna in *RV* 3. See Conze 1962, 172, 232 ff., for further discussion of this doctrine and its classical sources.

STAGE FOUR

1. Cf. *MAB,* 64: "He who lacks enthusiasm for good action is completely incapable of engaging in [the practice of] generosity [and the other perfections], and therefore these other qualities are never produced."

2. "Discernment" is Tib. *blo gros* [*kyi*] *tshogs,* Skt. *matisambhāra* or *dhīsambhāra.* Here *blo gros* is synonymous with *ye shes* (= [*advaya*] *jñāna*).

3. Cf. *MAB,* 68: "At this stage, within [the bodhisattva] the philosophical view of a real, substantial 'I' is eradicated. So it is said: 'Sons of the conquerors, situated at this bodhisattva stage [called] "The Radiant," the bodhisattva is devoid of all arising and descending concepts, reflections, notions of permanence, notions of mine-ness, and notions of property—that is, any [idea] following from belief in a real, substantial self which is founded on strong clinging to the [conventional] "I," to a sentient being, to a life force, a nourisher, a man [not in *DB*], a person, or to the psychophysical aggregates, the *dhātus,* or the *āyatanas.*' " (Cf. *DB,* chap. 4, p. 25: *tasya khalu punar bhavanto jinaputrā bodhisattvasyāsyām arciṣmatyāṁ bodhisattvabhūmau sthitasya yānīmāni satkāyadṛṣṭipūrvaṅgamāny ātmasattvajīvapoṣapudgalaskandhadhātvāyatanābhiniveśasamucchritāny unmiñjitāni nimiñjitāni vicintitāni vitarkitāni kelāyitāni mamāyitāni dhanāyitāni niketasthānāni tāni sarvāṇi vigatāni bhavanti sma /* For *kelāyita MAB* has *brtan pa* (= *sthira, dṛdha, nitya*); the Sanskrit is also sometimes translated as *bstsal pa.*) For "arising and descending concepts," see La Vallée Poussin 1907, 311 n. 2: "Je pense que *unmiñjita, nimiñjita* sont de simples variantes de *samāropa, apavāda,* ou *āvyūha, nirvyūha,* et signifient: affirmation, négation." "The philosophical view of a real, substantial self" (Tib. *'jig tshogs la lta ba = rang du lta ba;* Skt. *satkāyadṛṣṭi*) is a technical expression specifically denoting the concept of a personal (subjective) self; that is, the concept of an "I" as opposed to the apprehension of any other sentient self external to the conceptualizing "I." The expanded form of the expression reads: *'jig tshogs la lta ba'i ri'i rtse mo nyi su mtho ba;* in Sanskrit, *viṁśatiśikhārasamudgatāḥ satkāyadṛṣṭiśailāḥ.* Although there is a slight discrepancy between the Tibetan gloss and the Sanskrit original, both refer to the "twenty towering peaks of the mountain, which is the belief in a real, substantial (abiding) 'I' within transitory, composite things." The twenty aspects of the reified concept of a self are discussed in *MA* 6.144–145; actually these aspects are four types of reified concepts applied to each of the five psychophysical aggregates. The four basic types, as associated with the first of the aggregates, form *(rūpa),* are (1) the self *is* form, like a sovereign; (2) form *qualifies* the self, like an ornament; (3) form is *possessed* by the self, like a slave; and (4) form *contains* the self, like a vessel (cf. *MVP* 208). Also see *MAB* 5.7 (commentary), and Lamotte (1944–1980), 2:737 n. 3; and 4:15–17, for his lengthy note on the expression.

STAGE FIVE

1. Cf. *MSA* 20.35: "Bringing living beings to [spiritual] maturity and guarding their own thoughts, the wise conquer suffering [at this stage], and therefore it is called 'The Unconquerable' " *(sattvānāṁ paripākaś ca svacittasya ca rakṣaṇā dhīmadbhir jīyate duḥkhaṁ durjayā tena kathyate /).*

2. Cf. *MAB,* 69: "A bodhisattva abiding at the fifth bodhisattva stage cannot be subdued even by the *devaputramāras* found in all world systems, to say nothing of their servants and minions. Because of that, this stage is called 'The Unconquerable.' " All evil is rooted in spiritual ignorance *(avidyā),* which is manifest in innately occurring patterns of reified thought. Cf. *BCA,* 177: "All intellec-

tual processes have the intrinsic nature of reified thought, because their objective supports are [themselves] without any objective support. And all reified thought whatsoever has the intrinsic nature of spiritual ignorance, because it grasps at nonentities. So it is said: 'Reified thought itself takes the form of spiritual ignorance' " *(sarvā hi buddhir ālambananirālambanatayā vikalpasvabhāvā vikalpa ca sarva evāvidyāsvabhāvaḥ avastugrāhitvāt yad āha / vikalpaḥ svayam evāyam avidyārūpataṁ gataḥ iti /)*. Spiritual ignorance in the form of reified thought is one of several mental afflictions *(kleśas)* that are associated with the experience of evil, usually subdivided into four principal types: (1) *kleśamāra:* evil experienced through the mental afflictions of clinging, antipathy, pride, attachment to philosophical views, and doubt or incurable cynicism; (2) *skandhamāra:* evil that comes from the reified concept of a real, substantial self felt to abide within or among the psychophysical aggregates; (3) *mṛtyumāra:* the transient nature of all things, experienced most dramatically as death; and (4) *devaputramāra:* the anthropomorphic personification of evil.

STAGE SIX

1. *MAB,* 73: "This stage is [called] 'The Directly Facing' because [the bodhisattva] directly faces the Dharma of a perfect buddha."

2. Conditionality is the same as dependent origination *(pratītyasamutpāda)*. "Things are by nature similar to a reflection" (*MAB,* 73).

3. The reference here to "cessation" *(nirodha)* is multifaceted. The reader should consult Conze 1962, 113–116 and 236, for a brief discussion of the meaning of this concept in *VM* and *AK*.

4. "Discrimination" (Tib. *blo;* Skt. *mati*) is here synonymous with "wisdom" (Tib. *shes rab;* Skt. *prajñā*). The same simile is used in *BCA* 9.1 and *AS,* 87.3.

5. *MAB,* 77: "This treatise, which bears the fruit of teachings in perfect accord with [the concept of] dependent origination, should be revealed only to one who has through previous meditative cultivation planted the seeds of emptiness in his [psychophysical] continuum—it is not for any others. This is because even though they may hear about emptiness, these others [derive from such teachings] the most meaningless notions stemming from misconceptions about emptiness. On the one hand, those who are relatively unintelligent [simply] abandon the teachings on emptiness and travel on to bad migrations; while on the other hand, [strict rationalists] imagine that emptiness means nonexistence. Relying on this erroneous interpretation, they develop and propagate nihilistic philosophical views."

6. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 14 (p. 387): *pṛthagjanatve 'pi niśamya śūnyatām pramodam antar labhate muhur muhuḥ / prasādajāsrāvanipāta-(pramodajāsrāvinayata-) locanaḥ tanūruhotphullatanuś ca jāyate //* Here and in following citations from *SBS,* the parentheses contain La Vallée Poussin's reading where it differs from the one adopted by Bendall.

7. Ibid., *yat tasya sambuddhadhiyo 'sti bījaṁ tattvopadeśasya ca bhajanaṁ saḥ / ākhyeyam asmai paramārthasatyam tadanvayās tasya guṇā bhavanti //*

8. Ibid., fol. 15 (p. 387): *śīlaṁ samādāya sadaiva vartate dadāti dānaṁ karuṇāṁ ca sevate / titikṣate tatkuśalaṁ ca bodhaye pra(pari-?)nāmayaty eva jagadvimuktaye //*

9. *MAB,* 81: "That is to say, he who desires the stage [called] 'The Joyous.' This [path] has the characteristics that are about to be explained. Now, in order to furnish information on the nature of the right view of things there are [passages] in the sūtras, as for example the words of the *Āryadaśabhūmika* (*DB,* 31): 'Sons of the conquerors, the bodhisattva who has completely fulfilled the path at the fifth bodhisattva stage passes on to the sixth bodhisattva stage by virtue of [his comprehension of] the ten [types of] sameness of all things. What are these ten? (1) All things are the same insofar as they lack any causal sign *(nimitta);* (2) all things are the same insofar as they lack any distinguishing characteristic *(lakṣaṇa);* (3) likewise they are unoriginated; (4) unborn; (5) isolated; (6) pure from the beginning; (7) devoid of conceptual diffusion; (8) neither accepted nor rejected (cf. La Vallée Poussin 1907, 278 n. 2, about *āvyūha* and *nirvyūhā*); (9) all things are the same insofar as they are like a mirage, a dream, an optical illusion, an echo, the moon in water, a reflection, or a magical creation; and (10) all things are the same insofar as they are exempt from the duality of existence and nonexistence. Comprehending in this way the intrinsic nature of all things, he [develops] great patience *(mahākṣānti)* in accord [with his understanding] and so reaches the sixth bodhisattva stage, "The Directly Facing." Therefore, the master [Nāgārjuna] determined in this connection that through rational instruction in the sameness of things as regards their non-origination, the other [types of] sameness would easily follow, and so he placed [the following verse] at the beginning of his *Mādhyamikaśāstra:* 'Neither from itself, nor from another, nor from both, and certainly not devoid of cause; no things whatsoever are produced at any time or in any place.' " *MS* 1.1 is here cited by Candrakīrti as an introduction to *MA* 6.8. After presenting the four alternatives, he proceeds to analyze the implications of each one in greater detail.

10. Cf. *PSP,* 13: *tasmād dhi tasya bhavane na guṇo 'sti kaś cij jātasya janma punar eva ca naiva yuktam /*

11. *MAB,* 82: " 'An [entity]' refers to that which is being produced or that which accomplishes the action of production, that is, to the sprout. 'From itself' means from the individual essence of just that [entity] which is being produced. Therefore the sense of the statement is as follows: 'This sprout's own individuality is not produced from its own individuality.' Why is this? Because there is nothing to be gained from an existing sprout's own individuality arising from the same existing individuality, just because [this individuality] has *already*—previously—come into existence."

12. *'Jig rten 'dir* is supplied in *TKP,* 152. In other words, such an assumption would contradict direct perception.

13. *MAB,* 83: "If one asserts that the seed already produced is produced again, [then in this event] what obstacle would there be to its being born all over again? And yet, the continual reproduction [of the seed] must be stopped somehow so that the sprout can be produced." Cf. *TKP,* 152: "Just this seed would be reproduced without interruption until the end of all existence."

14. *MAB,* 83: "It may be supposed that the contributing conditions associated with the production of the sprout—the water, time, and so forth—transform the seed and give birth to the sprout; and this sprout [then] destroys the seed, since it would be contradictory for it to exist simultaneously along with [its] creator. In this way the abovementioned fallacy would be avoided, and

because the seed and the sprout would still be different [from each other], production from self would indeed be possible. . . . This [argument] also is inadmissible, however. . . . Because the seed and the sprout are not different, it is unreasonable that the sprout should destroy the [seed], which would be tantamount to its destroying its own individuality."

15. Tib. *nus;* Skt. *vīrya.* La Vallée Poussin 1907–1911, pt. 2, 281 n. 5, calls the term problematic, and suggests that it is some kind of medico-magical potential for healing. "Flavor" *(rasa)* and "ripening" *(vipāka)* are also medical terms.

16. If a cause and its effect are absolutely identical, then on what grounds are we to distinguish between the two of them, and how is it that they appear to be different?

17. *MAB,* 85: "Since, appearing as the sprout, the individuality of the seed would not be perceived as it is in its essence, so, because of its not being different from the seed, the individuality of the sprout should also not be perceived—just as the seed's individuality [is not perceived]."

18. Cf. *SBS,* fols. 18–19 (p. 390): *loko 'pi caikyam anayor iti nābhyupaiti naṣṭe 'pi paśyati yataḥ phalam eṣa hetau / tasmān na tattvata idaṁ na tu lokataś ca yuktaṁ svato bhavati bhāva iti prakalpyam //*

19. *MAB,* 86: "For just that [reason], the master [Nāgārjuna] made a distinction [between soteriological and conventional perspectives in this matter] and repudiated production in a general way, stating that it is not from self."

20. *MAB,* 87: "It may be said that entities do not arise out of themselves: This is certainly the case, and the [first] alternative is reasonable. But you have [also] said: 'How can it [arise] from others?' (6.8a), and that is not reasonable." Candrakīrti devotes more space to this second alternative than to any other, probably because it most closely conforms to common sense and empirical observation (see 6.22). The Prāsaṅgika directs these arguments toward the following Buddhist schools: the Svātantrika-mādhyamika, the Yogācāra, the Sautāntrika, and the Vaibhāṣika. With the exception of the Sāṁkhya (included under the first alternative), the Jain (the third alternative), and the Cārvāka (the fourth alternative), all non-Buddhists are included in this category.

21. Cf. *SBS,* fols. 19–20 (p. 390) and *PSP,* 36: *anyat pratītya yadi nāma paro 'bhaviṣyaj jāyet[a] tarhi bahulaḥ śikhino 'ndhakāraḥ / sarvasya janma ca bhavet khalu sarvataś ca tulyam paratvam akhile janake ('janake) 'pi yasmāt //*

22. *MAB,* 89: "That is, because of [its] quality of being other."

23. *MAB,* 90: "Just as the grain of rice, because it is the producer, is different from the rice sprout, its result, so fire, coal, a barley seed, and so forth—which are not producers [of a rice sprout]—are also [different from the rice sprout]. And just as the rice sprout is produced from the grain of rice which is different [from it], so it would be produced from fire, coal, a barley seed, and so forth. And just as the rice sprout which is different [from it] arises from the grain of rice, so a jug and cloth will also [arise from the rice grain]. This is, however, not perceived, and therefore there is no [production from another]." According to this second alternative, a cause and its effect are absolutely separate or self-sufficient. If this were true, the Prāsaṅgika argues, the gap between the two could never be bridged, there could be no possible context for a relationship, and the

distinction between a cause and a non-cause of any given effect would be altogether negated. The flame, for example, is different from darkness: By what criteria are the two not related as cause and effect?

24. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 20 (p. 390): *śakyam prakartum iti kāryam ato niruktaṁ śaktaṁ yad asya janane sa paro 'pi hetuḥ / janmaikasaṁtatigatāj janakāc ca yasmā[c] chālyaṁkurasya ca tathā [pi na kodravādeḥ] //* La Vallée Poussin has *janakāc ca tasmāc chālyaṁkurasya na tathā* ˘ – ˘ – – // and the following note. "Le manuscrit porte . . . *yasmāt chālyaṁkurasya ca.* —On peut lire: *na tathā jananam yavādeḥ.*"

25. *MAB,* 91: "The nature [of the relationship between] cause and effect rests upon a particular mode of 'otherness,' and not on otherness in general." The opponent here is attempting, through the use of his notion of a continuum, to reestablish the normal context of relationship that must exist between two things he has previously defined as completely separate. The continuum would seem to make it possible for cause and effect to be simultaneously different and yet not different.

26. The flower seeds are by definition different from the rice sprout simply because they do not possess its characteristic qualities; and if the grain of rice is designated as "other" than the rice sprout, then it must be so designated for the same reason.

27. Cf. ibid.: *asty aṁkuraś ca na hi bījasamānakālo (na samānakālo) bījaṁ kutaḥ paratayāstu vinā paratvam / janmāṁkurasya na hi sidhyati tena bījāt saṁtyajyatāṁ parata udbhavatīti pakṣaḥ //*

28. *MAB,* 92–93: "One can see that [two individuals named] Maitreya and Upagupta (cf. n. 89, below) are interdependent and different [from each other] only because they exist simultaneously, but the seed and its sprout are not such that they can be imagined as simultaneously [existent], since until the seed has been altered the sprout does not exist. When, in this way, the seed and the sprout do not exist simultaneously, then the seed can possess no [quality of] 'otherness' with respect to the sprout. And if this [quality of] otherness is not present, then it is false to say that the sprout is produced from another."

29. *MAB,* 94: "The above claim that the seed and the sprout do not exist simultaneously may be challenged as unreasonable, as follows: Just as the ascent and descent of [the two ends of] a scale's balance occur simultaneously, so it is at the moment when a seed is being destroyed and the sprout being produced. This comes about in such a way that at exactly the moment when the seed is destroyed, at precisely that moment—simultaneously—the sprout is produced."

30. Cf. *PSP,* 545: *janmonmukhaṁ na sad idaṁ yadi jāyamānaṁ nāśonmukhaṁ sad api nāma nirudhyamānam / iṣṭaṁ tadā katham idaṁ tulayā samānaṁ kartrā vinā janir iyaṁ na ca yuktarūpā //*

31. Candrakīrti provides the following explanation (*MAB,* 95): "In this case, 'what is being produced' inclines in the direction of production [and is not yet actually produced], therefore it belongs to the future; while 'what is being destroyed' inclines in the direction of destruction [and is not yet actually destroyed], and so it belongs to the present. In this way, that which does not exist because it is not yet produced is produced; and that which does exist because it is already present is destroyed. Given this state of affairs, what possible resem-

blance is there to the circumstances surrounding the operation of the scale? The two ends of the scale's balance are actually present, and therefore the ascending and descending movements can [logically be said to] occur simultaneously; however, the seed belongs to the present and the sprout to the future, and on this account [one cannot logically assert that] they exist simultaneously. The [problem with the seed and the sprout] is therefore not in any way analogous to the example of the scale. And if our opponent should happen to believe that even though two things do not in fact exist simultaneously, still their actions can take place simultaneously—then [we must object]: This also is untenable, for it cannot be admitted that the actions of things are independent of the things themselves."

32. *MAB,* 96: "The agent *(kartṛ)* of the impending action of being produced, that is to say, the sprout, belongs to the future, and so does not [yet] exist. Granted that [the sprout] does not exist, there is then no basis *(āśraya)*.[for its action], and that [action], does not exist [either]. And since no [action] exists, how can it be simultaneous with the destruction [of the seed]? On this account it is illogical [to assume] that the two actions [of production and destruction] are simultaneous. As [Nāgārjuna] has written (*MS* 7.17): 'If any unproduced entity whatsoever existed anywhere, then it would be produced; [but] why would an entity be produced when it is nonexistent?' The meaning of this [verse] is as follows: If any entity, as, for example, a sprout, were to exist unproduced prior to production, then it would [eventually] be produced. However, prior to production nothing whatsoever or wheresoever can be established as existent, because it is unproduced. Therefore, prior to being produced, the entity that furnishes the basis for the action of production does not exist, and without this [basis], what will be produced?" The argument is summarized (*CSt* 1.18): "Because the sprout arises neither from a destroyed seed nor from an undestroyed seed, you declare that all production is like the manifestation of a magical illusion."

33. *MAB,* 97: "[An opponent might propose the following:] The seed and the sprout do not exist simultaneously. Consequently there is no 'otherness' *(paratva),* and production is illogical [under such circumstances] (according to the terms of the second alternative). However, when there is simultaneity, then in that event, because 'otherness' would be present, production also would be feasible. As for example the eye and form, and so on, along with feeling *(vedanā)* and the other coappearing [factors, are causes which] act to produce the simultaneous [and related effect of] visual cognition." (Visual perception is produced from a simultaneously existing array of causal factors.) The response to this claim is (*MAB,* 98): "If you assert that the eye and so on and perception *(saṁjñā),* etc., exist simultaneously [along with visual cognition] and serve as the conditions for that visual cognition, then they most certainly are 'other' with respect to the [existing visual cognition]. However, because there is absolutely no need for the arising of that which [already] exists, so there would be no production; and if you want to avoid the negation of production by asserting that [visual cognition] does not exist, then in that case the eye and so forth would not be different from a nonexistent visual cognition. The fallacy entailed in this [thesis] has already been explained. Therefore, if you insist on production from another, then even when 'otherness' is possible, production is impossible, and

when production is impossible, duality [between cause and effect] is impossible. And if production is possible, then there is no 'otherness,' and here again duality is impossible. Consequently, [one must admit that] appearances in no way represent the existence of external objects and are empty of any external object: [And where appearances] have disappeared, only words remain."

34. Cf. *MS* 20.21–22: "What cause produces an effect that is intrinsically existent? And what cause produces an effect that is intrinsically nonexistent? The quality of being a cause is not present in that which is not producing, and when the quality of being a cause is not present, what is the effect attributed to?" These two alternatives have already been dealt with in the preceding verses.

35. *MAB,* 100: "The simultaneous possession of [two] essences, one entailing existence and one nonexistence, is simply not possible in a single [entity]; and therefore an entity in possession of this intrinsic nature does not exist. And because it does not exist, what [influence] can producing causes exert over it?" The argument against simultaneous possession of neither existence nor nonexistence is analogous to the one just presented. A single entity that is neither existent nor nonexistent at one and the same moment is not only never perceived, but would by nature be self-contradictory. All four alternatives in the tetralemma have now been presented and discussed in some detail with regard to causation, and Candrakīrti takes up the system of the two truths.

36. *MAB,* 101: "Since it is grounded simply in individual perception of all [things], everyday experience is endowed with tremendous power. And it is evident [on this basis] that one entity is produced from another. Appeal to reason is appropriate only in the case of that which is not directly perceived, but it is inappropriate where direct perception is involved. Therefore, even in lieu of any adequate [inferential support], it must still be true that entities are produced from other [entities]." Also cf. *TKP,* 172–173: "There are those who have imperfectly understood the sense of scriptures [dealing with emptiness], who have planted and matured on the beginningless wheel of saṁsāra the potentialities for apprehension of entities as [intrinsically] existent. They have become strongly attached to the [supposed] existence of these entities, and for a long time have had no spiritual friend. As a result of this deprivation they have also been deprived of repeated teaching on the absence of intrinsic being, and have become entrenched in misguided opinions that are actually invalidated by everyday experience. Without explaining the various ways in which everyday experience comes to be, it is impossible to reverse these misguided opinions. Therefore it is necessary to isolate the specific *yul* ('object' or 'meaning') that must be rejected, through stating that 'such and such *yul* is invalidated by everyday experience,' and the specific *yul* that is not to be rejected, through stating that 'such and such an *yul* is not invalidated by everyday experience.' "

37. Cf. *BCA,* 174: *samyagmṛṣādarśanalabdhabhāvaṁ rūpadvayaṁ bibhrati sarvabhāvāḥ / samyagdṛśāṁ yo viṣayaḥ sa tattvaṁ mṛṣādṛśāṁ saṁvṛtisatyam uktam //*

38. *MAB,* 102–103: "The blessed buddhas, who understand perfectly the intrinsic nature of the two truths, taught of the two categories of intrinsic nature possessed by all concepts and all material things . . . as follows: [the intrinsic nature of] the screened *(saṁvṛta);* and [that of] the highest meaning *(paramārtha).*

The highest meaning is that nature [of all things] revealed through being the specific object of the wisdom that entails accurate perception. However, [this highest meaning] is in no way established through any intrinsic quality of self. This is one nature of all things. The other is the intrinsic nature obtained on the strength of false perceptions made by common people in whom the eye of intelligence has been completely covered by the cataract of spiritual ignorance. This intrinsic nature is as well not established in itself, but is simply the object [revealed] through the perception of naive people. In this way all things bear a dual intrinsic nature."

39. Both of these are, however, illusory from the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning.

40. *BCA*, 171: *vinopaghātena yad indriyāṇāṁ ṣaṇṇām api grāhyam avaiti lokaḥ / satyaṁ hi tal lokata evaṁ śeṣaṁ vikalpitaṁ lokata eva mithyā //*

41. Defects of the five senses can be either internal or external. Internal defects are constituted by disease or by any malfunction of the sense organ. External defects are magical or optical illusions of any sort, reflections, echoes, and so forth. Defects of the sixth faculty (mind) come about not only by false cognition grounded in any of the above problems, but also by faulty reasoning or misconceptions that may or may not be bound up with particular philosophical views. Dreams fall into this category.

42. *MAB*, 105–106: "These non-Buddhist [philosophers] want to penetrate to Reality, they want to ascend ever upward toward perfection in determining accurately and without confusion matters concerning production and destruction—things taken for granted even by impure people like cowherds and women. Consequently, they are like someone climbing a tree, first letting go of one branch and then clinging to another, until they take a mighty fall into the abyss of philosophical views. Then, because they are deprived of perception of the two truths, they will not obtain the result [of liberation, for which they strive]. Those things conceptualized by them [as for instance] the three qualities *(guṇas)* [of the Sāṁkhya system], and so on, are nonexistent even within the context of the screened [truth] of everyday experience."

43. Cf. *BCA*, 178: *na bādhate jñānam ataimirāṇām yathopalabdhaṁ timirekṣaṇānām / tathāmalajñānatiraskṛtānām dhiyāsti bādhā na dhiyo 'malāyāḥ //*

44. *MAB*, 106: "Exposition of the refutation of production from another is not [accomplished] by confining oneself to the perspective of everyday experience. How is it [accomplished] then? By accepting the vision of the Buddhist saint." Cf. the discussion of incommensurability in part 1, §5.1. The perception of emptiness characteristic of stainless knowledge *(amalajñāna)* does not contradict everyday experience, but only the various forms of conscious (philosophically contrived) and unconscious (innately occurring) reified concepts imputed over and above the consensus of everyday practice. These ideas are referred to as "conceptual diffusion" *(prapañca)*.

45. *BCA*, 171: *mohaḥ svabhāvāvaraṇād dhi saṁvṛtiḥ satyaṁ tayā khyāti yad eva kṛtrimam / jagāda tat saṁvṛtisatyam ity asau muniḥ padārthaṁ kṛtakaṁ ca saṁvṛtim //*

46. Here *svabhāva* is used as a synonym for *śūnyatā*.

47. *MAB*, 107–109: "Here 'delusion' is that which causes sentient beings to become muddled in the view of entities as they are [in the full context of every-

day experience, and this] spiritual ignorance is [called] a 'screen' *(saṁvṛti)* because, in imputing to entities the existence of an individual essence which does not exist, it is characterized by its being an obstruction to awareness of [their] intrinsic nature (i.e., emptiness). The [entity so perceived] appears to be real on account of this screen, and where there is no intrinsic being, the appearance of intrinsic being is manifest to common people. [This entity] is real [only] within the context of the screen, which is worldly error; it is the fabrication which constitutes dependent origination. Some [of the things] which have originated dependently, like reflections, echoes, and so on, appear unreal even to spiritually ignorant people. However, there are others—for example, [the colors] blue and so forth, form, mind, feeling, etc.—that appear to be real. Their intrinsic nature (emptiness) does not appear in any manner to the spiritually ignorant. Therefore, this [emptiness], along with whatever appears as unreal even within the context of the screen, is not [called] the truth of the screen. The [balance of] what is perceived to exist under the influence of the spiritual ignorance of afflicted beings is designated the truth of the screen. For the śrāvakas, the pratyekabuddhas, and the bodhisattvas who are free from the spiritual ignorance of afflicted beings, [conventionally real] composite things are seen to have the same quality of existence as reflections and the like. These things have the intrinsic nature of a fabrication; they are perceived as unreal because [the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas] are without any inflated concepts of 'truth' *(satyābhimāna).* That which is deceptive for naive people (reified concepts of 'self,' 'intrinsic being,' etc.), as well as other things like magical illusions and so forth, are mere screen [still included in the "screen" of everyday life] because they [too] are dependently originated. Accordingly, the blessed one has spoken about the truth of the screen, and the mere screen. That which is of the highest meaning for common people is a mere screen for the Buddhist saints dwelling in the realm of appearances. Emptiness, the intrinsic nature of that screen, is of the highest meaning for them. The highest meaning for buddhas is just that intrinsic nature [of entities] (emptiness). And although it is the truth of the highest meaning, because it is not deceptive they must each come to know it through personal experience *(de yang bslu ba med pa nyid kyis don dam pa'i bden pa yin la / de ni de rnams kyi so sor rang gis rig par bya ba yin no /).* Because the truth of the screen is deceptive, it is not [called] the truth of the highest meaning. Having taught about the truth of the screen, the author (Candrakīrti) desires to teach the truth of the highest meaning. However, because it is inexpressible and not within the realm governed by [dualistic] knowledge, so it is impossible to teach of it as though it were an [objectively present] fact *(dngos su bstan par mi nus pa).* Therefore he will provide an example for those who want to learn, so that [they may] clarify its intrinsic nature through their own experience" *(rang gis myong ba nyid du de'i rang bzhin gsal bar bya ba'i phyir dpe bshad pa /).*

48. Cf. *BCA,* 176: *vikalpitaṁ yat timiraprabhāvāt keśādirūpaṁ vitathaṁ tad eva / yenātmanā paśyati śuddhadṛṣṭis tat tattvaṁ ity evam ihāpy avehi (avaihi) //*

49. *MAB,* 111 (cited from the *Satyadvayāvatāra* [?]): "How is it that [this truth] cannot be verbalized as 'the truth of the highest meaning'? All things are screened and deceptive. . . . Thus the truth of the highest meaning cannot be taught. Why is this? Because teacher, teaching, and listener are unborn in the

truth of the highest meaning, and unborn things cannot be described by unborn things." Under the influence of spiritual ignorance and clinging even the questions one asks turn back on themselves in a spiral of reified thought and confusion. The movement to a radically different form of life must be made by gradually learning to abandon the old questions and the entire way of thinking that endowed them with significance.

50. Candrakīrti is concerned here with what Tsong kha pa has called "the most profound and subtle matter within the Mādhyamika system" (*TKP*, 139)—the concept of causal efficacy as the sole criterion for conventional validity. Essentially, the point here is that soteriological and conventional truths do not interfere with each other because they are set in a hierarchical structure (as opposed to a mutually exclusive relationship). They are incommensurable, not contradictory, because they deal with different realms of experience and entirely different needs. Causal efficacy is sufficient evidence of conventional reality despite the circumstance that, from a "higher" perspective, both cause and effect are interrelated in such a way that neither exists in and of itself. According to the Mādhyamika, any attempt to justify everyday experience through something other than consensus leads to spiritual and intellectual problems.

51. This intuition of a direct relationship between cause and effect is the basis of reified concepts of "necessary connection" and the like.

52. *MAB*, 116: "The actual meaning here is this: If both the seed and the sprout did possess some intrinsic being, then they would have to be either identical or different. But when neither one of them has any intrinsic being, then as with the seed and the sprout apprehended in a dream—how can there be [any question of] identity or otherness?" Cf. *MS* 18.10: "That which exists in dependence on [something else] is to that extent not identical with that thing nor different from it; on this account there is no annihilation and no permanence."

53. *MAB*, 117: "If an intrinsic distinguishing characteristic of things [like] form, feeling, and so forth—an individual essence or intrinsic being—was produced by causes and conditions, then when the yogi perceived things as empty of any intrinsic being and [so] understood that all things are without intrinsic being, emptiness would certainly be understood through negation of this intrinsic being which had been produced. Emptiness would then be the cause of negation of this intrinsic being just as surely as a hammer is the cause of the destruction of a jug." In this context, an "intrinsic distinguishing characteristic" *(svalakṣaṇa)* is a logical mark posited in order to define the single quality that endows an entity with intrinsically valid existence: this would be the individual essence of intrinsic being of the entity as defined by the Mādhyamika's opponent. The Mādhyamika responds that things are without any intrinsic being whatsoever, and consequently there is for him no question of the production or destruction of such a being, or of any logical mark indicating its presence. The concept of existence through an intrinsic distinguishing characteristic *(svalakṣaṇasiddha)* is grounded in the writings of Vasubandhu as interpreted by the two famous Yogācāra epistemologists Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. It is a concept that had far-reaching and subtle implications for later Mādhyamika developments in India and Tibet. See Kochumuttom 1982, 25–26, for a brief discussion of the concept with reference to the relevant classical sources.

54. Candrakīrti's commentary provides the following illustration: Suppose that through the proper combination of wood, strings, and workmanship a lute is built. When a wise man listens to the sound of this lute and examines what he hears he will discover that it actually comes from nowhere and goes nowhere—the tone is simply the end result of a skillful assemblage of wood and strings. In the same way, when a yogi examines any composite thing produced from causes and conditions, he finds there only emptiness. "The distinguishing characteristic of things is of the essence of space" (*MAB,* 122). When an entity accepted as existent on the basis of conventional truth is closely examined, one discovers that the only actual "mark" or characteristic feature of this entity is its emptiness. There is no "real, discrete object" to be found, despite the fact that in everyday experience the entity is produced and destroyed. Nevertheless, the truth of the screen which governs the world is not to be absolutely discredited: "Just as a foreigner cannot be made to understand through any language other [than his own], so the world cannot be made to understand without the use of a conventional language" (*CS* 8.19). The Tibetan here is very idiomatic, and our English rendering strays far from any so-called literal translation. One could say, "Because when entities are examined no abode is found other than the entity characterized by the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning], therefore the conventional truth of the world is not to be critically examined." The point is that rational analysis of conventional truths will yield no absolute, objective truth. Cf. *MA* 6.158–159 and notes 104, 123,124 and 191, below.

55. *MAB,* 123–124: "No entity whatsoever remains exempt from [the relations of] cause and effect. Once he understands how even reflections without any intrinsic being *(svabhāva)* also adhere to causal relations, then what intelligent person would determine that form, feeling, and so on are endowed with intrinsic being? One need only understand them as they exist in the context of their causal relationships, and it follows that no [entity] is produced through its intrinsic nature, despite its being apprehended as existent."

56. Cf. *MS* 21.14: "When one accepts the [intrinsic] existence of the entity, then he must consequently [accept] either the philosophical view of absolutism or of nihilism, because an [intrinsically existent] entity must be either permanent or impermanent." Also ibid., 17.31–33: "Just as the magician creates through his magical power a magical creature, and that magical creature, [itself] created, goes on to create another magical creature; so the agent of any action *(kartṛ)* is like the [first] magical creature, and the action *(karma)* taken [by that agent] is like the second magical creature created by the [first]. The various mental afflictions, action, the body, the agent of action, and the results of that action are like visions of an imaginary fairyland, like mirages or dreams."

57. A given action exists only as an effect dependent on a particular collocation of causes and conditions, and as a contributing factor toward the production of its own related effect(s). The efficacy of this action is so determined only within the context of everyday experience, where it can be construed as taking its proper place in the network of cause and effect that makes up the relations governed by conventional truth. The component parts of the network, which are necessarily perceived in the form of causes and effects, are devoid of intrin-

sically valid existence, and the network itself is nothing more than the matrix of day-to-day reality. The postulation of an epistemologically or ontologically isolated "truth" or "reality" set entirely apart from this fabric is both arbitrary and meaningless for the Mādhyamika philosopher, because from his perspective truth and reality can be defined only through relationship. Cf. *MAB,* 126: "From the point of view of one for whom action is not produced through an intrinsic quality of self, in this case neither is [any action] terminated. It is certainly not impossible for the result to arise from an undestroyed action; [and because] the action is not destroyed, the relationship [through time] between cause and effect is perfectly justifiable."

58. *MAB,* 127–129 (citing from the *Bhavasaṁkrāntisūtra*): " 'Mighty king, it is [to be understood] like this: Suppose for example that some man is sleeping and dreams that he is in the company of a beautiful woman. She is [simply] an object in his dream, [yet] when he has awakened he becomes [obsessed with] the memory of her. Mighty king, what do you think?: Would an intelligent man [behave in this way]?' 'No he would not, blessed one. Why not? Because, blessed one, this beautiful woman in the dream does not exist and is not apprehended [in waking life]. What chance would there be for him to engage in any activity with her? Therefore he is a poor and unfortunate man.' The blessed one then said: 'Mighty king, in just this way, naive and spiritually ignorant people perceive forms with their eyes and develop a strong craving for those [forms] that are agreeable, and having developed this craving they become attached [to them]. Once attached they go on to perform acts of body, mind, and speech that arise out of clinging, antipathy, or delusion. Once performed, these actions are terminated; and once terminated, for some interval they remain neither in the east . . . nor toward any cardinal point. But some time later this person will draw near to the moment of death, and the activity that was his destiny [in that life] will have been exhausted. When the terminal moment in the last phase of consciousness has arrived, then his mind will directly confront that very activity, [which is] just like the beautiful woman who served as the object for that [other] person even after his having awakened. And so, mighty king, once the last phase of consciousness has terminated, the first phase of consciousness associated with birth will arise among the gods, or the hungry ghosts, [or in whatever appropriate realm]. And in the interval immediately following the termination of that first phase of consciousness, there issues forth a mental continuum in accordance with his immediate destiny, wherein he will experience the ripening [of that former activity which confronted him during the terminal phase of consciousness in his previous existence]. Mighty king, termination of the last phase of consciousness is called death/transmigration, and arising of the first phase of consciousness is called birth. Mighty king, even at its terminal moment, the last phase of consciousness does not go anywhere; and when the phase of consciousness associated with birth arises, it does not come from anywhere. Why is this? Because [they are] devoid of intrinsic being. Mighty king, the last phase of consciousness is empty of death/transmigration. Action is empty of action. Birth is empty of birth. Even so, it is a matter of direct experience that actions are inexhaustible.' "

59. There is no ultimately valid reason for a diseased eye's seeing drifting

hair where a healthy eye perceives nothing—this is simply a characteristic of the disease, and a matter of direct experience for the person with ophthalmia. Similarly, within the context of daily life a given action produces its own result, and when this result has been produced, that action will have realized its full potential. A single blow from a single hammer breaks a single specific jug, and once the blow has been struck and the jug broken, there will be no other jug in any other time or place broken through that blow. From the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning, the result produced no more exists than any number of other nonsensical consequences that have not and never will take place (e.g., the destruction of a jug not present when the blow was struck). Both results are equally void of any noncircumstantial reality. Both are empty. However, at the level of conventional truth it is simply a matter of direct experience that the first result is accepted as true, while the second is imaginary.

60. *MAB,* 131: "The blessed one thought: 'Common people who become excessively rational will denounce both action and its consequences and so negate the screen [of conventional truth.' Therefore he declared that] the ripening of the consequences of action is incomprehensible, and he rejected [rationalistic] thinking leading to [philosophical views concerning] action and its consequences."

61. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 25 (pp. 393–394): *evaṁ hi gambhīrataràn padārthān na vetti yas taṁ prati deśaneyam / asty ālayaḥ pudgala eva cāsti skandhā ime vā khalu dhātavaś ca //*

62. "Bases of consciousness" *(dhātus)* is not in the Tibetan text.

63. *MAB,* 132–133: "The disciples who have cultivated non-Buddhist philosophical views for quite some time are unable to penetrate to the profound meaning of the *dharmatā.* When they hear about the *dharmatā* as taught in the words [of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*]—'There is no self,' 'There is no production' —they are at the beginning simply frightened. They consider the teachings on emptiness like an abyss, and having turned their backs they find no meaning [in such teachings. However, if] through having been previously taught about repository consciousness they have rejected these non-Buddhist systems, they will then find great meaning [in the concept of emptiness]. Later on when they have correctly understood the significance of the sūtras, these [notions of repository consciousness and so on] will be spontaneously abandoned. Consequently, [in such teachings] there is only advantage, and no fault need arise. As Āryadeva has written (*CS* 5.10): 'In the beginning one should practice that which is agreeable, for he who is broken can never be a vessel for [teachings on] the true Dharma *(saddharma).*' "

64. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 25 (p. 394): *aham mamety eva yad ādideśa satkāyadṛṣṭer vigame 'pi buddhaḥ / tathāsvabhāvān api sarvabhāvān astīti neyārthatayādideśa //*

65. On the problem of using language to break free of unexamined presuppositions, cf. Whorf 1956, 121: "The background linguistic system of each language is not merely a reproducing system for voicing ideas, but rather is itself a shaper of ideas, the programme and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade." Nevertheless, in order to teach anything at all, even a buddha must use language and the conceptual presuppositions embodied in it, and in order to explain the most profound and subtle meaning of emptiness it is necessary to

use as expedients certain concepts that are ultimately incommensurable with the true sense of the Mādhyamika critique. Candrakīrti writes that Nāgārjuna composed his *Madhyamakaśāstra* specifically in order to distinguish between those sūtras which are definitive *(nītārtha),* and those which are nondefinitive *(neyārtha)* (*PSP,* 41). In various places throughout the scriptures teachings can be found that are ostensibly in conflict with each other. Authors of commentaries created a distinction between definitive and nondefinitive meaning as a hermeneutical device and used it to account for this problem by pointing out that certain texts are not literally true, but are designed to meet the demands of particular situations. Naturally there has been considerable disagreement as to just which passages are "literally true," and which are not. For a general discussion of the types of teaching and the implications of each, see Ramanan 1966, chap. 5. Also see Ruegg 1985.

66. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 23 (p. 392): *prajñāvihārī sa hi bodhisattvo vijñānamātrapratibuddhatattvaḥ / grāhyaṁ vinā grāhakatām apaśyad (apaśyan) vijñānamātraṁ tribhavam paraiti //*

67. Cf. ibid.: *yathā taraṅgā mahato 'mburāśeḥ samīraṇapreraṇayodbhavanti / tathālayākhyād api sarvabījād vijñānamātraṃ bhavati svaśakteḥ //*

68. *MAB,* 137-138: "Just as one knows that when a breeze stirs across the ocean, [which is the aggregate of] the particles of water that constitute the substratum of waves, and the waves which were apparently sleeping are propelled through the intervention of this merely circumstantial wind so that they obtain individual corporeal being and disperse in every [direction]; in this case as well, from the ripening of traces [formed through] coming together of the apprehender and the apprehended—[traces which] have been deposited since beginningless time in a serial continuum—consciousness obtains existence [as] individual entities which [subsequently] perish. A particular trace is then deposited in the repository consciousness, [a trace] that becomes the cause of production of another phase of consciousness in accordance with the representation of the [previous phase]. And when this [trace] has progressively attained maturity through the intervention of its own ripening conditions, it then produces a 'dependent [form]' which is impure. Although naive people conceptualize the mental abstractions of 'apprehended' and 'apprehender,' still no such 'apprehended' [object] whatsoever exists in isolation from consciousness. . . . Just as those who assert a cause such as God, and so forth, [also] assert that this God is the creator of all beings, so those who assert the repository consciousness maintain that this repository consciousness is [itself] all seeds, because it is the receptacle of the seeds associated with apprehension of all entities. The distinction is simply that while God is called eternal, the repository consciousness is not."

69. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 23 (p. 392): *saṁvidyate 'taḥ paratantrarūpam prajñaptisiddhis tu (prajñaptisadvastu-) nibandhanaṁ yat (sac) / bāhyaṁ vinā grāhyam udeti sac ca sarvaprapañcāviṣayasvarūpam //*

70. See "The Yogācāra doctrine of the three marks," §3.5.2, above. These characteristics are reinterpreted by the Prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika. First, the distinguishing characteristic of the perfectly accomplished *(pariniṣpannalakṣaṇa)* is, for the Yogācārin, the ultimate absence of any distinction between mind and its object. According to the Prāsaṅgika, however, it is the ultimate absence of any

quality of intrinsic being—that is, the lack of any transcendent ground underlying everyday experience. It is the emptiness of the highest meaning *(paramārtha-niḥsvabhāvatā).* Second, the distinguishing characteristic of that which is dependent *(paratantralakṣaṇa)* characterizes entities as the objects of relative, dualistic knowledge and as unique, discrete entities dependent on a particular collocation of causes and conditions. For the Yogācārin, discrete entities exist intrinsically, each arising out of repository consciousness through its own potentiality. The Prāsaṅgika recognizes this characteristic as the mark of the absence of any quality of intrinsic being within manifest phenomena. It is the logical mark which designates their relational nature, their emptiness through being produced in dependence on each other *(pratītyasamutpanna).* Third is the distinguishing characteristic of that which is imagined *(parikalpitalakṣaṇa).* While the first two characteristics have to do with the truth of the highest meaning, this is the mark of the purely imaginary character of all things, imputed through assigning them names. For the Yogācārin, names contribute to the mistaken belief that things are independent of the perceiving mind, but the Prāsaṅgika identifies the mistaken impression fostered by conceptual labels as the belief in intrinsically valid existence.

71. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 23 (pp. 392–393): *vinaiva bāhyaṁ na (bāhyaṁ vinā kva* [?]*) yathāsti cittaṁ svapne yathā ced idam eva cintyam / svapne 'pi me naiva hi cittam asti yadā tadā nāsti nidarśanaṁ te //*

72. Or simply: "there is no thought." Because thought has no intrinsic being, it is not produced, nor does it pass away. Cf. 6.52, below.

73. The Prāsaṅgika maintains that the opposition between consciousness and its object is upheld even in dream states. One must, of course, distinguish an object perceived while dreaming from a similar object perceived while awake. However, such a distinction is relevant only from the point of view of conventional truth. From the perspective of the highest truth, according to the Prāsaṅgika, neither consciousness nor its objective referent is produced, and therefore both are nonexistent (cf. *MAB,* 140).

74. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 23 (p. 393): *svapnasya bodhe smaraṇātmano (smaraṇān mano) 'sti yady asti bāhyo viṣayo 'pi tadvat / yathā mayā dṛṣṭam iti smṛte tu bāhyeti (smṛtis te bāhye 'pi) tadvat smṛtisambhavo 'sti //*

75. Cf. *MAB,* 141: "Just as thought is [established as] existent from memory of what was experienced in the dream, there is also a memory of the object experienced in the dream, and so it too exists, or else it is necessary to conclude that consciousness as well does not exist [in the dream]."

76. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 24 (p. 393): *cakṣurdhiyaḥ sambhava (cakṣurdhiyo 'sambhava) eva svapne nāsty asti vai mānasam eva cetaḥ / tadākṛtau bāhyatayā niveśa*[*ḥ*] *svapne yathehāpi tathā mataṁ cet //*

77. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 24 (p. 393): *bāhyo yathā te viṣayo na jātaḥ svapne tathā naiva mano 'pi jātam / cakṣuś ca cakṣurviṣayaś ca tajjaṁ rūpaṁ (cittaṁ) ca sarvaṁ trayam apy alīkam //*

78. *MAB,* 142: "Just as, when a form is seen [in waking life], the eye, the form, and the mind are all three present. so during a dream, when an object is discerned, the full ensemble of these three must be apprehended; and just as there [in the dream] the eye and the form do not [intrinsically] exist, likewise

visual cognition does not [intrinsically] exist. And it is the same for all other types of cognition."

79. The "mental triad" includes mind *(manas),* the mental object which acts as its objective referent *(dharma),* and mental cognition *(manovijñāna).*

80. *MAB,* 144: "As in a dream the object, the sense organ, and the cognition are not real, so it is in waking life also. Thus one must understand, and therefore it has been clearly stated [in the sūtras]: 'Just as magical creations appear to be apprehended, while actually they are not real, so all things are like magical [creations], or like a dream, according to the teaching of the sugata.' And similarly: 'The [various] migrations of existence are like a dream, here no one is born and no one dies, there are no sentient beings, no names, and no life: these things are like bubbles, [empty] like a banana tree.' "

81. *MAB,* 145: "This is just like the [example of the] dream. With respect to the vision of the person afflicted with ophthalmia, the appearance of the hair also exists [and not simply the cognition of that hair]; while with respect to the vision of a person not so afflicted, both of the two are unproduced [and not merely the appearance of the hair]. Therefore it is difficult to discern consciousness in the absence of any object."

82. *MAB,* 146: "If awareness of the appearance of hair is produced in a person afflicted with ophthalmia when no hairs exist, then it follows that, when a person not so afflicted looks toward the place where the person with ophthalmia sees the hair, he also should have a cognition of hair . . . because the absence of the object is common [to both the healthy and the diseased eye]."

83. *MAB,* 146: "If the existence of an object is the cause for production of a cognition, then [the situation] will be just as [described above]. However, it may be that ripening or nonripening of a previously deposited cognitive trace *(vijñānavāsanā)* is the cause [respectively] of the production or nonproduction of the cognition. Consequently, that [particular] image would be manifest only to him in whom the trace [previously] deposited by a different knowledge of the hair would [already] have completely ripened, and it would not be [manifest] to anyone else."

84. *MAB,* 147–148: "In this case, if there is to be any awareness of the potentiality, then it must occur in association with present, past, or future cognition; and for each of these, the potentiality to produce a cognition is impossible. In the event that the potentiality is involved in a genitive relationship [with the cognition—that is, the cognition is possessed by or contained by its potentiality], then it is illogical to say that the cognition, having the nature of an effect, also exists as the cause. If this were the case, then the effect would have no cause, and even when the sprout had been produced, still the seed would not be destroyed. Therefore, potentiality is impossible for a cognition [already] produced. In the event that the potentiality is involved in an ablative relationship [with the cognition—that is, the cognition proceeds out of its potentiality], then it is illogical to say that the cognition [already] produced becomes manifest for the potentiality—because it exists, as was explained above (in 6.8cd). In this way, no potentiality exists for a [cognition already] produced." Either way, for there to be any relation between a cognition and its potentiality, both of them must already exist.

85. *MAB,* 148: "In the absence of a qualification, that which is to be qualified does not exist. Why is this? [In the expression] 'potentiality of a cognition' *(vijñānasya śaktiḥ)* 'cognition' is the qualifier of 'potentiality,' and 'potentiality' is the base of the qualifier. But one cannot cogently demonstrate anything by refuting or affirming an unproduced entity, [designating it] either 'cognition' or 'noncognition.' When such is the state of affairs concerning [the unproduced], then in stating 'this is the potentiality of this' (the genitive relationship), what is [intended] to qualify the potentiality? And likewise, when the qualifier does not exist, the statement 'this becomes manifest from this' demonstrates nothing whatsoever, because it fails to mention a qualifier. Furthermore, if one attributes potentiality to the unproduced, then it must also be attributed even to the son of a barren woman."

86. *MAB,* 149: "Anything that will come to be at any time whatsoever might indeed be called 'imminent.' However, that which most certainly never will become manifest, like the son of a barren woman, or space, cannot be [imminent]. Therefore, in this case, if the potentiality did exist then the cognition might be imminent; but when the potentiality does not exist on account of the nonexistence of the future cognition (as in the present proposition), then, like the son of a barren woman, for want of potentiality the [cognition] cannot be imminent."

87. *MAB,* 150: "When the existence of the cognition is [necessary to] the potentiality for that [same cognition], and the cognition is manifest from that potentiality, then [we have an instance of] 'dependence on a reciprocal object.' If such is indeed the case, then it must be admitted that cognition does not exist through any intrinsic being. For example: Just as the existence of long is [dependent] on short, while the existence of short is [dependent] on long; or the existence of the far bank is [dependent] on the near bank, while the existence of the near bank is [dependent] on the far bank—so it is that what is designated in this way does not have existence through any intrinsic being. And if such is the state of affairs, then this is in complete agreement with what we ourselves have been saying." Cf. *MS* 10.10: "That entity which exists in dependence does so in dependence on [another entity, and] if that which is to be depended upon would also exist—then what is dependent on what?" and *MS* 10.11: "When that entity which exists in dependence is [not yet] existent, then how is it dependent? Even when it [already] exists in dependence, its dependence is not logical." A nonexistent entity cannot logically be said to "depend" on anything, and if entities have anything other than purely conventional existence, then they must exist independently of one another, for if the existence of *x* rests entirely on the existence of *y*, and vice versa, then both are like unreal phantoms produced from nowhere.

88. *MAB,* 152: "If the future cognition arises, as an effect, through [the force of] a cognition that has been produced and terminated—that is, from the ripened potentiality of a terminated cognition which deposited [that] particular potentiality in the repository consciousness—then one [cognition] would arise from the potentiality of a different [cognition]."

89. Our translation here is based on Tsong kha pa, since the autocommentary did not provide any help in interpreting the two names. *TKP,* 268, shows

nyer sbas for La Vallée Poussin's *nyer spras,* and adds "because they are two separate persons" *(gang zag so so'i gzang nyid yin pa'i phyir na /).* La Vallée Poussin 1907–1911, pt. 2, 340, translates *byams pa nyer spras la* as "de l'affection et de l'aversion."

90. *MAB,* 155: "The trace of visual cognition is deposited in repository consciousness by a different cognition that is in the process of terminating. Subsequently, from the ripened trace is produced a cognition that assumes its image. That immediate moment associated with the potentiality which is the source [of the cognition] is understood to be the physical organ of the eye by spiritually ignorant people. However, there is no organ of the eye apart from cognition; and the other organs are just the same in this respect."

91. *MAB,* 156: "The [flowers of the] Bandhujīvaka, Kiṁśuka, and so on are produced with a red image which does not rely on shifting external colors as does a gem; on the contrary, one apprehends the continuum of the sprout and so forth produced as a particular image in accordance with the potentiality projected [into repository consciousness] by its own seed. Likewise, in the absence of an external form [colored] blue or the like, a cognition arises appearing as blue, etc.; and common people are persuaded that this appearance . . . is of the nature of an external object." The autocommentary goes on to draw the analogy of a ruby reflected in clear water. The reflection, like the appearance of a cognition, is perceived as a genuine external object by those who are unaware of the nature of the illusion.

92. *MAB,* 158: "Vision in a dream—just as in the case of a blind man who is awake—is without [its] instrument (the eye), which is the source of [visual] cognition; [however,] it affects the image that rests in a cognition associated with the ripened potentiality of the visual organ, and not [the image that rests in] a mental cognition that develops from the ripened potentiality of a [previous] mental cognition. Therefore, as in [the case of] the blind man who is awake, where absence of the eye is not sufficient cause for [a mental cognition as vision], so sleep during a dream is no cause for the ripening of a trace belonging to [such a] cognition." Tsong kha pa adds the following comments (*TKP,* 270): "In a dream mental cognition appearing as blue and so on arises in the absence of a visual organ: Why is it, then, that vision of form and the like, such as that enjoyed by a man with good eyes, is not produced as [in the dream] to the blind man who is awake, since the absence of a visual organ is common to both the dream and waking [states of the blind man]? And furthermore, if production of cognition is established through intrinsic being without any external form, then it is so [established] in both waking life and sleep through some unspecified and mysterious quality. [The Yogācārin] may think: 'In a blind man who is awake there is cause for the non-arising of clearly appearing mental cognition of forms like that in the dream. However, this is not due to the absence of the eye, but rather to the unripened potentiality for the arising of such mental cognition. Consequently, where there exists a ripened potentiality, it is [a cause of] the arising of a similar mental cognition. And [such potentiality] exists in sleep, in dream only, and not in waking life.' This is unreasonable. If according to [the Yogācārin] the ripened potentiality for the sixth mental [sense] cognition exists in a dream but not in waking life; then [we ask], why is it unreasonable [to

assert as follows]: As here in waking life there is for a blind man no ripened potentiality clearly appearing as form and so forth, so, in the same way, during a dream it should not exist. [Such an assertion] would be reasonable (i.e., it would be in accord with the Yogācārin's premises)."

93. "Unsubstantiated thesis" (Tib. *dam bca'*; here most likely for Skt. *sādhya:* the major term [probandum] of the syllogism). As Nāgārjuna has no proposition *(pratijñā)* of his own and therefore no fallacy (*VV* 29), so Candrakīrti rejects the theoretical claims of the Yogācāra as misguided attempts to provide a transcendental ground for the sociolinguistic matrix of everyday experience. *MAB*, 158: "If you maintain [such arguments] merely on the authority of words . . . then we [Mādhyamikas] must also be allowed to maintain [our arguments] strictly on the strength of words."

94. *MAB*, 161–162 (cited from an unidentified source): "Blessed one, it is through entry into the sense faculties that one enters into the *dharmadhātu*. There are twenty-two faculties (here follows a list of the six faculties, including the faculty of conceptualization, and sixteen others drawn from the Abhidharma, including such "faculties" as pleasure and pain). The visual faculty is not apprehended in any of the three times, and that which is not apprehended in any of the three times is not a visual faculty. How is it, then, that what is not the visual faculty actively manifests [itself] as a conventional reality? As, for example, an empty clenched fist, which is deceptive and actually does not exist [as perceived] (i.e., it does not actually contain anything). Despite their being imputed in name, neither emptiness nor the fist is apprehended in any ultimate sense *(pāramartikaḥ)*. Like this empty fist, the visual faculty is deceptive and does not actually exist [as apprehended]; it possesses a false and seductive nature that deceives naive people. It does not exist, it is not real, and although it is imputed in name, nevertheless the visual faculty is not apprehended in any ultimate sense. When the blessed one attained spiritual omniscience, for the purpose of winning over in some measure sentient creatures dwelling in error, he acknowledged the visual faculty [as a conventional reality], but it does not exist in any ultimate sense. The faculty is without intrinsic being, empty of any quality of being a faculty; the eye does not exist through the quality of being an eye, the faculty does not exist through the quality of being a faculty. How is this? The eye is without any intrinsic being. That thing which has no intrinsic being is not a real entity, and [when erroneously perceived] what is not a real entity is not perfected (*apariniṣpanna*, not of the highest, soteriological truth). [In the highest, soteriological sense] it neither arises nor passes away, nor can it be imputed as past, [present,] or future. . . . Faculties are like a dream, and similarly all things whatsoever are not apprehended through any essence. Therefore they are inexpressible."

95. This is a visualization performed as a meditation on impurity *(aśubhabhāvanā)*, specifically intended to counter inordinate passion and attachment that may interfere with other study or practice.

96. The three factors of sensation are the object, the sense organ, and the cognition associated with these two.

97. Rivers flowing in the realm of the hungry ghosts are said to be filled with pus.

98. That is to say, the cognition and its object exist only in the context of their relations with each other, and whether or not they are "real" is a matter to be decided on conventional, pragmatic grounds. A meditator or a hungry ghost may well perceive and be affected by objects that are fictitious by everyday standards.

99. "Dependent entity" *(paratantravastu)* is a synonym for "dependent form" *(paratantrarūpa). MAB,* 165: "Having demonstrated the impossibility of cognition in the absence of an external [object, these lines] are intended to refute the existence of the entity alone."

100. *MAB,* 166: "If the dependent exists empty of both the 'apprehended [object]' and the 'apprehender,' then according to you, what knower would apprehend the existence [of such an entity]? It is illogical that it should apprehend itself, because there is an implicit contradiction in [the notion of] introceptive activity *(svātmanivṛtti):* a sword edge does not cut itself; the tip of a finger does not touch itself; even a well-trained and expert acrobat cannot climb up on his own shoulders; fire does not burn itself; and the eye is not visible to itself. [For the Yogācārin,] neither is the [entity] apprehended by another awareness, because this would contradict his own tenets, for it would entail [the following consequence]: If one cognition is the object of another cognition, then this would [describe] the conditions of 'mind alone'; therefore, the apprehender [of the entity] would be totally nonexistent, and that which is not apprehended [by anything] has no claim to existence." But the Yogācārin asserts that "mind alone" is the apprehender of all objects, and that it, and not the objects, is ultimately existent.

101. The Yogācārin wants to establish his doctrine of reflexive awareness in the following way (summarized from *MAB,* 167–168): "The memory of a given event is simply 'memory of an object' and not 'memory of the experience of an object.' Why is this so? If memory included 'memory of an experience,' then a second 'experiential cognition' would be required to experience the memory itself, and a third to experience this second 'experiential cognition.' . . . This would involve the fallacy of eternal regression. Furthermore, the cognition must experience itself, because otherwise one cognition must experience another, discrete cognition, which would require a third cognition, and so on and on. The same fault would be applicable. [The Prāsaṅgika's rejoinder] If this is supposed to be proven from the ultimate point of view, that is, by postulating the presence of intrinsically existent realities referred to as 'cognition,' 'memory,' and 'object,' then we suggest that our opponent consult our previous arguments concerning this issue. If, however, it is to be proven from the perspective of everyday experience, then there is a logical fallacy in such an argument which must be acknowledged. Reflexive awareness is taken as the proof of memory, while at the same time memory is used as the proof of reflexive awareness. The argument is circular and therefore invalid."

102. *MAB,* 169: "In this case, if such a claim can be made on the strength of each and every [entity's] having been established as a real substance, then production from self and from another are [both] untenable, and consequently memory itself is an impossiblity: How could the unsubstantiated [concept of] reflexive awareness be proven by the unsubstantiated [concept of] memory?

Moreover, if it is [to be proven] on the strength of everyday convention, then from this perspective as well [it must be admitted that] memory as the cause of reflexive awareness is an impossibility. Why is this? If in this case reflexive awareness is to be proven by [a syllogism incorporating] 'cognition' [as the major (i.e., unproven) term]—like [the term] 'fire' (in the classic syllogism used to infer the existence of fire from the presence of smoke), and if because of the existence [of this cognition], as in [the syllogism involving] smoke and fire, the existence [of reflexive awareness] is to be proven through the medium of a subsequently arising memory, then reflexive awareness is not conclusively proven. In this event, how is it that there can exist a memory 'having reflexive awareness as its cause,' and 'not arising without awareness'? The existence of a 'magic water stone' does not follow from the mere sight of water, and the existence of a 'magic fire stone' does not follow from the mere sight of fire. This is so because even without such miraculous gems water can be produced from rain, and fire from friction. In the same way, even without postulating the existence of reflexive awareness, one can account for the arising of memory [as a purely conventional phenomenon]."

103. The argument here is a bit obscure, but the main point is clear enough. With or without the reflexive awareness postulated by the Yogācārin, a memory must always be different from the cognition of the original experience, and the nature of the relationship which obtains between two such distinct events remains to be explained. Cf. *MAB,* 171: "This argument—namely, 'because it is different'—supersedes all other particularities such as the fact of being included in a single continuum or the fact of being entities [related as] cause and effect. Because the moment of the memory-cognition *(smṛtijñāna)* arises subsequent to the [remembered] experience, it is different. Therefore, just like the cognition belonging to another continuum, it cannot be included in a single continuum with the cognition of the original experience *(anubhavajñāna),* nor can it participate in the state of affairs defined by two entities [related as] cause and effect."

104. The memory of an experience is no different from the actual experience insofar as both are presented in the form of a dichotomy between perceiving subject and perceived object. Cf. *MAB,* 172: "This is the practice current in the context of everyday experience, and as such it is not to be [rejected through] excessive recourse to analysis *(shin tu dpyad par bya ba ni ma yin te),* for conventional reality survives through the grace of these fictions."

105. *MAB,* 172: " 'It is aware of itself': [In this assertion] the self which is being known is the object *(karmabhava),* the same [self] is the agent (*kartṛ,* i.e., the knower), and the activity [of knowing] is also not separated [from this self]. As a consequence, the agent, the object, and the action are identical. The sameness of these [three] is nowhere actually perceived—as though a carpenter, the wood, and the activity of cutting were identical!"

106. *TKP,* 302–303: "Because his philosophical view lacks the subtlety associated with the wisdom that discriminates [between the nondefinitive] and the highest, definitive meaning [in the scriptures], our opponent the Cittamātrin (Yogācārin) has developed strong attachment to a mere part of the body of [explanation of] the dependent, as though [this part] were the [highest] truth.

On account of this, he has thrown out the ambrosia contained in the jug of [explanation of] the dependent and refilled it with a watery, unsystematic rational analysis. For the sake of his own poorly ordered thinking he has used reason to negate the ordered conditions taken for granted throughout everyday experience—things that can be proven only from the perspective of that experience: expressions like 'remain,' 'go,' 'act'; external form and things produced from externally apprehended [objects], for example, feeling, and so on. Therefore all that remains for the the Cittamātrin is trouble, and he will never attain to success, that is, to the highest station [of a buddha]. When the external [object] is rejected, it is only reasonable that whatever is related to it, like [the expression] 'go,' and so forth, would also be negated. What he teaches is entirely divorced from the truth of the screen. . . . The [Cittamātrin] philosopher erroneously explains nondefinitive meaning as though it were definitive meaning. In so doing he strays from the intention of the buddha's teaching and simply treads the path of a system constructed out of his own imagination." (In accordance with Tsong kha pa, we should probably read *rgud pa* in place of the *rgyud pa* of La Vallée Poussin's Tibetan edition [1907–1912, 174.12].)

107. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 28 (p. 396): *ācāryanāgārjunapādamārgād bahirgatānāṁ na śivābhyupāyaḥ (śive 'sty upāyaḥ) / bhraṣṭā hi te saṁvṛti-satyamārgāt (-tattvasatyāt) tadbhraṁśataś cāsti na mokṣasiddhiḥ //*

108. Cf. ibid.; and *BCA,* 179: *upāyabhūtaṁ vyavahārasatyam upeyabhūtaṁ paramārthasatyam / tayor vibhāgaṁ na paraiti yo vai mithyāvikalpaiḥ sa kumārgayātaḥ //*

109. *MAB,* 175–178: "The knower of the world, without having learned them from another, taught the two truths—the truth of the screen and the truth of the highest meaning: there is no third truth. The conqueror taught the truth of the screen in the interest of all living creatures, for the benefit of the world, through which these beings would develop faith in the sugata with the object of [finding] joy [in liberation from suffering]. The lion among men designated as a 'screen' teachings concerning the six migrations of the mass of sentient beings: hell creatures, animals, hungry ghosts, demons, men, and gods. Low families and high, wealthy homes and poor, slaves, servants, women, men, and eunuchs: Whatever particularities that are found among living beings, incomparable one, these you have assigned to the world. And having penetrated, through wisdom, the truth of the screen, the knower of the world taught it to men. Living beings are content to circle in the round of transmigration, where they enter into the eight worldly qualities of gain, loss, fame, obscurity, praise, blame, joy, and misery. Those who gain cling [to their possessions], while those who lose become angry. The others not discussed here are also similarly understood as infected with one or the other of these eight diseases. Those who declare that this screen is of the highest meaning must be seen as misguided. They confound happiness with misery and misery with joy, claiming that the non-self has the intrinsic nature of self, and that impermanent things are eternal. Content to live in this way, when they hear what the buddha has spoken, they become afraid, and without understanding anything they reject what they have heard. Once they have rejected the words of the buddha, these living beings go on to experience intolerable suffering in the hell regions. Without any means they search for happiness, but because of their foolishness they endure

hundreds of miseries. Whoever comprehends with a clear mind [the truth of the screen] taught for the benefit of the world will pass beyond all desire, like a snake shedding an old skin. 'All things are without intrinsic being, empty, and devoid of any distinguishing characteristic': [This is the truth of] the highest meaning. He who hears this and becomes happy will obtain unsurpassed awakening. . . . Teachings on conventional truth are the means, and so it is written (*PSP*, 264): 'What hearing and what teaching is there of a Dharma without words? Yet what is without words *is* taught and heard, through a process of metaphorical imputation *(samāropād).*' "

110. Cf. §3.5.3, "The Prāsaṅgika critique," for the concept of *paratantrabhāva.* Tsong kha pa explains what is meant here by "for a specific purpose" (*TKP,* 308): "First, because it is necessary; second, in order to persuade students of the Mādhyamika to reject philosophical views; and third, as the means of gradually engendering an appreciation of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]."

111. *MAB,* 180: "The screen is to be accepted strictly in dependence on the consensus of others, and not on our own authority. Thus it is accepted only with reference to everyday experience. Consequently, if the refutation [of any element of conventional experience] is accomplished for the benefit of one who [normally] accepts it, then this is indeed a proper refutation—but not [if such a refutation] is attempted for the benefit of anyone else."

112. LA, 50.32: *cittadṛśyavikalpamātram idam yaduta traidhātukam /* Also cf. *DB,* 32.9: *cittamātram idam yaduta traidhātukam /*

113. If the Yogācārin intends to use these words in support of his argument, then the Mādhyamika offers an extract from the Yogācārin's own scriptural authority in response (*DB,* 6, 31–32): "The bodhisattva completely comprehends dependent origination according to its form. . . . He realizes that this mass of suffering, this tree of suffering alone is present, devoid of anyone who acts or feels. He realizes that 'the object of action' *(karman)* is defined through clinging to [the reified concept of] 'agent.' Where no agent exists, there the object of action as well is not apprehended in an ultimate sense. The triple world is mind only. The twelve limbs of existence distinguished and proclaimed by the tathāgata all rest on mind alone."

114. *MAB,* 184–185: "The expression 'non-Buddhist philosophers' *(tīrthikas)* is used in a generic sense, as it must also include any Buddhists *(dhārmikas)* who postulate a 'person' or the like. In a manner of speaking, these Buddhists are not Buddhists at all, since like the non-Buddhists they have not correctly penetrated the meaning of the teaching [on emptiness]. Therefore this designation applies to all of them."

115. Concerning the definition of "mind alone" provided here cf. *LA,* 34.2–3: "The person, the continuum, the psychophysical aggregates, conditions and atoms, a creator god, the high lord, and the 'agent'—these are [all] simply mind alone" *(pudgalaḥ saṁtatiḥ skandhāḥ pratyayā aṇavas tathā / pradhānam īśvāraḥ kartā cittamātraṁ vikalpyate //).*

116. The argument here is based on a bit of scholastic exegisis. La Vallée Poussin's translation of the first line differs from ours. He has, "De même que, bien que le mot buddha n'apparaisse pas devant [les mots] *tattva, vistara,* il y est

cependant sous-entendu." In the footnote to this section, he suggests the following interpretation: "*Lalitavistara* est dit pour *Buddhalalitavistara*, *Tattvāvatāra* pour *Buddhatattvāvatāra* (??)" (La Vallée Poussin 1907-1911, pt. 2, 242). Tsong kha pa explains the line quite differently (*TKP*, 314): "*Sangs rgyas* is explained as 'he whose wisdom concerning reality is *rgyas* (expansive).' The first word, that is, *sangs*, is not actually present [in the explanation], yet the title *sangs rgyas* is still explained in this way. In an analogous fashion, [when the sūtras say 'mind alone' for the full expression] 'mind alone is preeminent in the dichotomy of form and mind,' then the final word, 'preeminent,' is not actually present [in the abbreviated expression]." In deciphering the meaning of this stanza it is helpful to take into account the ancient explanation of the term buddha supplied by Yaśomitra, for this definition provides the key to the etymology of the Tibetan translation equivalent *sangs rgyas* (awakened-expansive). Cf. *AK* 1.2: "On account of the blossoming of intelligence buddha means 'blossomed' (or 'expansive': *vi-buddha*), as with a lotus that has blossomed. Or else, on account of the casting off of duality which is the sleep of ignorance, buddha means 'awakened' *(pra-buddha)*, as with a man who has awakened."

117. Cf. *SBS*, fol. 24 (p. 393): *rūpam eva yadi tatra niṣiddhaṁ cittamātram idam ity adhigamya (avagamya) / mohakarmajam uvāca kim arthaṁ cittam atra punar eṣa mahātmā //*

118. *MAB*, 186: "In the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (31.30–31) mind is said to have as its causes spiritual ignorance and the prenatal dispositions *(saṁskāras)*. Therefore it does not exist through any intrinsic distinguishing characteristic. If it did exist in this way, then it would not be dependent on spiritual ignorance or on the prenatal dispositions; but it is dependent on them. Therefore, mind is not intrinsically existent. Like the hair and so forth apprehended by someone afflicted with ophthalmia, it exists when the necessary conditions are present to create such erroneous [perception], and it ceases to exist when the requisite causes are no longer present." The problem is summarized a few pages later (*MAB*, 190): "What sensible person would look at [this] self-explanatory text and imagine that [it asserts that] mind exists as a real substance? A fantastic notion like this is the result of [previously formed] philosophical views."

119. Cf. *SBS*, fol. 24 (p. 393), and *BCA*, 222: *sattvalokam atha bhājanalokaṁ cittam eva racayaty aticitram / karmajaṁ hi jagad uktam aśeṣaṁ karma cittam avadhūya ca nāsti //*

120. *MAB*, 190–191: "Here 'the sentient world' is made up of sentient beings who receive their individual character *(ātmabhāva)* on the basis of their own volitional actions and afflictions *(kleśas)*; 'the insentient world,' from a whirlwind all the way up to the palace of the Akaniṣṭha [gods], is composed of that which is produced through common action. All such diverse [creatures] as, for example, a peacock—even to the eyes on his feathers—are produced by the particular *(asādhāraṇa)* action of the peacock. [Insentient things such as, for example,] lotuses, are produced from the common action of all sentient beings. Other [things of both sentient and insentient worlds] are to be understood in this way. . . . Therefore, the entire universe is produced from volitional action, but such action is dependent on mind. Only action associated with mind is accumulated [for retribution], and without mind there is no volitional action.

Consequently, mind alone is the preeminent cause of the creation of the universe." The relationship between mind (or 'thought,' *citta*) and volitional action *(karma)* described here and in 6.88 should not be thought of as linear or chronological. Mind and action are interdependent, since one does not exist without the other. Of the two, however, mind is primary, because it alone provides the "intent" or "will" *(cetanā)* which distinguishes the purposive action of living beings from the random movements of insentient things. Cf. *MS* 17.2–3, where action is defined as either *cetanā* 'mental' or *cetayitvā* 'physical' or 'verbal.' The force of such action is said to function as the cause of retribution either in the same or in some future life.

121. Among the various philosophical schools which make up the Prāsaṅgika's opponents, there is a considerable difference of opinion as to the identity of the agent. Some maintain that the only real agent is God, some say that it is a "principle of action," and still others assert that it is "mind." According to the Prāsaṅgika, in identifying the agent as "mind alone" *(cittamātram),* the sūtras do not negate the external, objective world, since it was never competing for the title of "agent." Cf. *MAB,* 192: "If two kings desire power in a single land, and one of the two rivals is expelled, while the other assumes control of the country, still the citizens would not be harmed in any case, because they are indispensable to both kings. It is the same here, because material form *(rūpa)* is indispensable to both [mind and any other possible agent]. Form remains unscathed [by the debate over the nature of the agent], and therefore one can unqualifiedly maintain that form exists."

122. "Them" *(de dag)* refers specifically to form and mind, but it also, according to Candrakīrti, includes all the psychophysical aggregates.

123. Cf. *LA,* 22: "Just as a physician prescribes medicine for various diseases, so the buddhas taught to sentient beings [the doctrine of] 'mind alone.' " Also ibid., 33: "Mahāmati the great bodhisattva addressed the blessed one in these words: 'In the teachings of the highest scriptures the *tathāgatagarbha* is described by the blessed one. It was described by you as being naturally brilliant, pure from the start with [all] purities, bearing the thirty-two marks [of a realized buddha], immanent in the bodies of all creatures. It was described as a jewel of immense value wrapped in soiled cloth: wrapped in the cloth of the psychophysical aggregates, of the elements of sensation *(dhātus),* of the sense organs along with their objects *(āyatanas);* dominated by clinging, antipathy, and delusion; soiled by the filth of conceptualization; [but] permanent, firm, and eternal. How is it, blessed one, that this talk of a *tathāgatagarbha* is not equivalent to the talk of the non-Buddhist philosophers concerning a self *(ātman)?* Non-Buddhist philosophers as well, blessed one, teach about the self as permanent, as a non-agent, without qualities, all-powerful, and devoid of parts.' The blessed one responded: 'Mahāmati, my teachings on the *tathāgatagarbha* are not at all equivalent to the talk of non-Buddhist philosophers concerning a self. But why is this, Mahāmati? The fully awakened saints, the tathāgatas, teach about the *tathāgatagarbha* as emptiness, as the limit of existence *(bhūtakoṭi),* as nirvāṇa, as unborn, uncaused, unceasing, and as other such things. Although the supreme *tathāgatagarbha* is not susceptible to reification *(nirvikalpa)* and devoid of any image *(nirābhāsa),* [still] they teach about it in this way so as to mitigate the

object of terror of those naive people [who are afraid of] selflessness. And yet here there is no clinging to this self, Mahāmati, on the part of present or future bodhisattvas. Just as, Mahāmati, a potter fashions a variety of pots from one mound of clay particles through applying a hand, technique, a stick, water, a string, and effort; so, Mahāmati, the same selflessness of phenomena which is absolutely free from all conceptualized distinguishing characteristics is taught by the tathāgatas by a variety of synonymous words and phrases, either through instruction on the *tathāgatagarbha* or on selflessness—and as with the potter, through application of diverse forms of wisdom or skillful means. Thus, Mahāmati, they teach about the *tathāgatagarbha* [for the purpose of attracting those who are attached to some reified concept of self]. The most profound knowledge of the scriptures of all the buddhas is characterized by emptiness, by nonproduction, by nonduality, and by the lack of any distinguishing characteristic."

124. *MAB,* 199: "The blessed buddhas introduce the disciples into the absence of intrinsic being by degrees. Just as giving and the other [perfections] are extolled from the beginning as means toward entering into the *dharmatā,* because those who have practiced giving and so forth easily enter into the *dharmatā,* so also refutation of the object of knowledge is a means toward penetration into selflessness. Therefore the blessed one initially taught the refutation of the object of knowledge. Those who comprehend the selflessness of the object of knowledge will easily penetrate to the selflessness of the knower. Among those who comprehend the absence of intrinsic being of the object of knowledge, some will arrive unaided at an understanding of the absence of intrinsic being of the knower, and some will arrive there with a little supplementary instruction. Therefore the buddhas initially taught about negation of the object of knowledge." "Refutation of the object of knowledge" refers to the Mādhyamika's rejection of any concept of an intrinsically existent entity, an entity supposed to exist entirely outside the context of its relationship with other entities and with the consciousness through which it is known. Once this refutation is appreciated, one can proceed to examine the relationship between the empty entity and the mind which takes it as an object of knowledge.

125. *MAB,* 206: "If entities were produced fortuitously, then just as the Panasa tree would not be the cause of its own fruit, so [that fruit] could just as well be produced from the Nimba, the Amra, and so forth, since all of them would be the same insofar as they have the quality of not being a cause. And just as [a fruit] would be produced from the Panasa tree even though [the Panasa tree] would not be the cause [of that fruit], so the same fruit might just as well be produced at any time in the past, present, or future. Fruit produced from the ripening of the Amra, the Lakura, and the rest, which appears at fixed times in dependence on the seasons, would exist perpetually, because it would not be dependent on the seasons. Likewise, because the peacock would not be the cause for its own feathers, such eyes might be found on the raven as well; and the peacock might just as well be born with the feathers of a parrot! In this way all the things of the world would be produced perpetually, or else they would not exist at all. On this account talk of spontaneous *(svabhāvena)* [production] is unreasonable."

126. Cf. *PSP,* 38: (6.100ab) *gṛhyeta naiva ca jagad yadi hetuśūnyaṁ syād yadvad eva gaganotpalavarṇagandhau /*

127. The argument there is directed against the Cārvāka or the Lokāyata. The discussion about the afterlife (*paraloka* 'another world') is with reference to transmigration. Candrakīrti characterizes the position of these philosophers as follows (*MAB,* 212): "[These philosophers] have two positions: (1) the position entailing belief in a form of intrinsic being associated with the material elements *(bhūtasvabhāva)* (that the self or mind originates within one or a combination of the material elements); and (2) the position entailing negation of any possibility of an afterlife (a denial of transmigration)."

128. "Object of knowledge" = the material elements.

129. According to Candrakīrti, when one negates the possibility of transmigration and assumes that the present material world is the only reality, he elevates the physical body to the status of an ultimately real entity. If the material elements of the body are intrinsically existent, and consciousness has its origin in these elements, then this is simply another way of positing the existence of a real (transcendental) self. The philosophical view which negates the possibility of an afterlife has, in this case, its foundation in the concept of intrinsic being associated with the material elements. Therefore, in holding such a view one tacitly postulates the existence of a real, intrinsically existent self within the elements of the physical body. Strict materialism (or rationalism) is in this important respect no different from idealism, for both positions are founded on presuppositions of an essence *(ātman)* supposed to provide everyday experience with meaning and structure, and both have failed to see through the constraints of our natural interpretations and associated observational languages.

130. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 21 (p. 391): *bhūtāni tāni na hi santi yathā tathoktaṁ sāmānyataḥ svaparato dvayataś ca janma / ahetukaṁ ca khalu yena purā niṣiddhaṁ bhūtāny amūni anuditāni na santi tasmāt //*

131. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 22 (pp. 391–392): *bhāvāḥ svabhāvarahitāḥ svaparobhayasmāj janmāsti hetum anapekṣya ca naiva yasmāt / mohas tu yena bahulo ghanavṛndatulyo lokasya te na (tena) viṣayāḥ khalu bhānti mithyā //*

132. *MAB,* 216: "The clouds of a profound delusion cover over perception of the intrinsic nature of [everyday things like the colors] blue and so forth, preventing naive common people from perceiving this intrinsic nature (emptiness). In its place they mistakenly cling to an individual essence that appears a reality to them."

133. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 22 (p. 392): *kaścid yathaiva vitathaṁ timiraprabhāvāt keśadvicandraśikhicandrakamakṣikādi / gṛhṇāti tadvad abudhaḥ khalu mohadoṣād buddhyā vicitram avagacchati saṁskṛtaṁ hi //*

134. *TKP,* 342: "[The Mādhyamika] philosophy makes it clear that volitional action stemming from prenatal dispositions arises from the foundation of delusion or spiritual ignorance, and without delusion that volitional action would not arise. Ordinary people should certainly know this and be governed by it, but when particularly adept people hear that the problem of spiritual ignorance itself [creates] the prenatal dispositions [to volitional action], they not only penetrate the emptiness of the absence of an intrinsic being within prenatal

dispositions, but they also clear away and abandon the profound delusion of spiritual ignorance with the sun of their noble minds—the comprehension of dependent origination. They no longer engage in volitional action stemming from prenatal dispositions because they have eliminated such action, and they are thereby released from the cycle of existence."

135. *MAB,* 218: "For now, this objection should be raised only against those whose eyes are afflicted with ophthalmia: 'Why is it that although you see nonexistent objects like floating hairs, still [you do not see] the son of a barren woman?' Later on, those whose eye of wisdom is clouded over with the ophthalmia of spiritual ignorance can also be questioned as follows: 'Why is it that although you see the [psychophysical aggregates of] form and so forth, which have an unproduced intrinsic nature, still [you do not see] the son of a barren woman?' We ourselves ought not to be questioned in this way. The yogis have directly perceived entities as [empty], and we others who desire to obtain the wisdom of the yogis have our highest aspiration directed toward those words that explain the intrinsic nature of all things. Although we do endeavor to explain the absence of any intrinsic being within entities, still this is done through the medium of philosophical treatises like this one, which are infused with the wisdom of the yogis. [These words] do not represent my own personal opinion, for in fact my eyes are still clouded by the ophthalmia of spiritual ignorance. . . . Nor are the yogis to be questioned about these things, for they do not perceive any intrinsic being within things either from the perspective of the screen, or from the perspective of the highest meaning."

136. The following objection has been raised: If material forms, including all their attributes such as color and shape, are not actually produced, then why should they still be perceived, while such other unproduced things as "the son of a barren woman" are not? That is, why should some nonexistent things be perceived, while other equally nonexistent things are not? The Mādhyamika's response is that such a problem cannot in fact be solved, but can only be disposed of by moving beyond the presuppositions responsible for it. This is accomplished by acquiring facility in using the contrasting set of presuppositions embodied in the soteriological truth of the highest meaning. In making the transition to an incommensurable, alternative set of presuppositions, one gradually comes to appreciate the depth of the conditioning that gives meaning and structure to our normal, everyday experience, and at the same time the built-in limitations of this conditioning also become more and more apparent. As Rorty and others have pointed out, questions of conventional reality have never been adjudicated through reference to philosophical concepts of production and nonproduction, but rather through recourse to the consensus of everyday, pragmatic experience. Chairs and tables are "objectively real" simply because most people perceive them and make use of them, while other objects that appear in dreams, mirages, and magic are only "subjectively real." They are perceived, but only under extraordinary conditions, such that they are generally considered to be deceptive and of little or no use to the community at large. The son of a barren woman, however, is completely unreal, because he is unproduced and inefficacious both in terms of the higher, soteriological truth and within the context defined by everyday concerns.

137. *MAB,* 202–221: "As the blessed one said (cited from an unidentified sūtra): 'The things of the world are like a dream, for in the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning] they are not grounded. And yet the deluded mind becomes attached even to a dream where nothing exists. Although fairy cities may appear, they do not exist in any of the ten directions or anywhere else. A fairy city is established in name only, and the sugata perceives the entire world in just this way. There is no water in a mirage, even though it is seen there by someone who has the perception *(saṁjñā)* of water. In the same manner, one who is misled by his imagination conceives of the disagreeable as agreeable. Just as in a highly polished mirror a reflection appears without any intrinsic being, so one must understand all other things as well. Even paradise itself [is not grounded in any intrinsic reality].' "

138. La Vallée Poussin's translation differs substantially from the one adopted here. He has: "De même toutes choses ne naissent pas en substance au point de vue de ce même monde [ou: de la réalité du monde]." Candrakīrti offers no clue in his autocommentary, but Tsong kha pa interprets the stanza as it appears in our translation (*TKP,* 342): *gzugs sogs kyi dngos po 'di kun 'jig rten gyi tha snyad dang / de kho na nyid gnyis kar rang gi ngo bo nyid kyis ma skyes so //*

139. Tib. *rang gyis yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa;* Skt. *svabhāvena parinirvṛtta.* In their innermost nature, all things [already] participate in complete nirvāṇa.

140. *MAB,* 223: "The word *ādi* (from the beginning) indicates that [things] are unproduced not only as they occur in the [nondualistic] knowledge of the yogi *(yogijñānāvasthāyām),* but even before this. Things are not produced by virtue of any quality of individuality even as they occur in the context of everyday convention *(lokavyavahārāvasthāyām).*

141. *MAB,* 224–225: "*Objection:* If the foundation of a designation *(prajñaptyāśraya)* exists, as must be the case with for example, earth, water, fire and wind, form, odor, flavor, and tangible [objects], then it is reasonable to say that the designation has a cause. But in the event that things are mere designations *(prajñaptimātra),* and there is no real substance serving as the foundation for the designation, then the conclusion that they are like the son of a barren woman is incontrovertible. *Response:* This also is unreasonable, because it is impossible to establish any real substance as the foundation for the designation. . . . As it has been said: 'Earth, water, fire, and wind do not exist as separate essences. Any one is nonexistent without the other three, and without that one the other three also do not exist. And when each of them does not itself exist, how is the composite produced?' Just as one does not assert that the impermanent is produced from the permanent, so an unreal substance is not produced from a real substance. As it has been said, once again: 'How is the impermanent produced from the permanent? One never perceives any disparity between the distinguishing characteristics of a cause and [its] effect.' Therefore, in a similar manner, a reflection, for example, that is a mere designation is nevertheless apprehended in a mirror, being founded on a collocation [of causes and conditions] including a face and other things which themselves exist as mere designations. A house is designated as dependent on its beams and other structural components which are also mere designations. And a forest is similarly designated as dependent on trees. Just as in a dream one apprehends a sprout that is unpro-

duced through any intrinsic being, so it is equally reasonable that no entity exists apart from its own designation. This designation is founded on [a collocation of] other entities which are themselves mere designations."

142. According to the Prāsaṅgika, all the erroneous hypotheses developed to account for production of entities stem from the fundamental ontological confusion involved in the notion that such entities actually exist in some a priori, atemporal manner, subject neither to perception nor to conceptualization. When, under the force of deconstructive analysis and meditative insight, entities are recognized as entirely contingent on a complex web of interrelationships involving both "psychological," sociological, and ontological factors, then theoretical accounts of production that go beyond what is given in everyday experience become superfluous.

143. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 26 (p. 394): *yā kalpanānāṁ vinivṛttir etat phalaṁ vicārasya buddhā vadanti / pṛthagjanāḥ kalpanayaiva buddhā akalpayan muktim upaiti yogī //*

144. "Analysis" (Tib. *rnam dpyod;* Skt. *vicāra*) here refers specifically to the deconstructive, reductio ad absurdum analysis epitomized in the *catuṣkoṭi.*

145. Cf. *PSP,* 340: *satkāyadṛṣṭiprabha[v]ān aśeṣān kleśāṁś ca doṣāṁś ca dhiyā vipaśyan / ātmānam asya viṣayaṁ ca buddhvā yogī karoty ātmaniṣedham eva //*

146. See stage 4, n. 3.

147. Cf. *PSP,* 344: *ātmā tīrthyaiḥ kalpyate nityarūpo 'kartā bhoktā nirguṇo niṣkriyaś ca / kaṁcit kaṁcid bhedam āśritya tasya bhedaṁ yātā prakriyā tīrthikānām //*

148. According to the Prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika, the cognitive basis for this deluded clinging to an "I" is the conventional, dependently originated "I."

149. Cf. *MA* 6.14–21, concerning "production from another."

150. *MAB,* 243: "Those sentient beings who even now, after the passing of numerous eons, have not escaped from the condition of birth as an animal, they also do not apprehend this kind of [eternal] self. The word also indicates those born in hell and so on."

151. Cf. *PSP,* 342: *skandhā ātmā ced atas tad bahutvād ātmānaḥ syus te 'pi bhūyāṁ sa eva / dravyaṁ cātmā prāpnuyāt tādṛśaś ca dravye vṛttau vaiparītyaṁ ca na syāt //*

152. This objection holds even if the self is considered to be simply mind. *MAB,* 246, says, "If according to [another] view the self is mind [alone], then in this case as well cognition is divided into visual and so forth; and because cognition is multiple and produced and terminated from one moment to the next, so the self also [would be subject to these qualifications]." The Pudgalavādin identifies the self with all five of the aggregates, and the Yogācārin identifies it with mind alone.

153. *MAB,* 245–246: "The self would become a [conventionally] real substance *(dravyaṁ cātmā prāpnuyāt):* Because the psychophysical aggregates are referred to as [conventionally] real substances—being differentiated through the divisions of past, [present, future], and so on; and because the self would be designated as just those [aggregates]: so the self would exist as a [conventionally] real substance. But [other Buddhists] would not want to admit this, on account of [contradictory testimony from the sūtras]: 'Monks, there are five things that are nothing but names, mere conventionalities, simple designations. Which five? Time past, time future, space, nirvāṇa, and the person.' And likewise: 'Just as one refers to a carriage as being founded on its composite parts, so one acknowledges the sentient beings of the screen (the conventional existence

of living beings) as founded (not equivalent to) the psychophysical aggregates.' . . . Furthermore, because the philosophical view of a real, substantial self would have as its object a [conventionally] real substance, it would not be erroneous [in the context of everyday experience]."

154. CF. *PSP,* 342: *ātmocchedo nirvṛtau syād avaśyaṁ / nāśotpādau nirvṛteḥ prāk kṣaṇeṣu / kartur nāśāt tatphalābhāva eva bhuñjītānyenārjitaṁ karma cānyaḥ //*

155. Because the five psychophysical aggregates no longer exist from the moment when nirvāṇa is realized, as a consequence of this thesis the self also would be destroyed at that time. Candrakīrti condemns this as nihilism—one of the extreme views *(antagrāhadṛṣṭis)* proscribed by the buddha (*MAB,* 247–248), yet it would seem that the same condemnation would apply to the idea that the aggregates themselves cease to exist.

156. *MAB,* 248: "[If the self is the aggregates, then] like these aggregates which are produced and terminated from one moment to the next, the self would be produced and terminated from moment to moment prior to realization of nirvāṇa, because it would have the intrinsic nature of these aggregates." If this were so, the self, like the physical body, would not continue from one lifetime to the next. Also, the self of one moment would endure the consequences of action performed by a different self, the self of a previous moment, and would escape the consequences of its own action.

157. The reference here is to the "inexpressibles" *(avyākṛtavastus),* fourteen points which, according to traditional accounts, were neither to be accepted nor denied. One should not consider the world eternal or not eternal, or both, or neither; nor understand it as subject to termination, or not subject to termination, or both, or neither (cf. *PSP,* 446; see *SN* 4, 475ff., for the classical source of this doctrine). In this passage it seems that Candrakīrti has used the expression "everyday experience" (*loka* 'universe,' 'world') with reference to all that goes to make up the objective and subjective constituents of conventional reality —that is, as a synonym for the five psychophysical aggregates. Cf. *MAB,* 251–252: "Therefore, if the expression 'everyday experience' implies the psychophysical aggregates, then because the aggregates are not eternal [being subject to production and destruction,] this is tantamount to saying that the world is not eternal. The same conclusion follows from the fact that there are no psychophysical aggregates in nirvāṇa. However, speculation to the effect that the world is subject to termination is expressly forbidden [as soteriologically useless], and consequently it is inappropriate to claim that the self is simply the aggregates." The syllogism constructed here is: (1) the world is the aggregates; (2) the aggregates are not eternal; therefore (3) the world is not eternal. Such a conclusion is in direct conflict with a doctrine accepted by all Buddhists and is for this reason unacceptable. On the other hand, it is not at all clear just what this has to do with the self, and no adequate explanation is to be found either in *MAB* or in *TKP.* The entire stanza is problematic.

158. *MAB,* 252–253: "If the self is either the aggregates or mind, then when the meditator realizes the [four noble] truths and the truth of suffering as represented in selflessness—that is, 'all things are without any self,' at that moment, in realizing selflessness, he would realize the nonexistence of the aggregates. This also is not admitted [by our opponents], and therefore the self is not the aggregates. But it may be suggested that the term self is employed when dealing

with the connection between action and its effect, because at that time no other self is possible, and [in this particular case self] implies 'aggregates.' But when it is a matter of the realization of selflessness, then it implies the real, internal agent imagined by others (i.e., non-Buddhists). Therefore when he realizes selflessness [the meditator] realizes that there are only prenatal dispositions devoid of any real, internal agent, and he does not consequently realize the nonexistence of [all] entities. . . . If [our opponent] fears the consequence that there would be realization of the nonexistence of [all] entities, and so takes the term self to mean 'eternal self,' then he does not consider the self to be either mind or the aggregates, and he has in this case strayed from [his own original] proposition."

159. If selflessness is understood as "the absence of an eternal self," then realization of selflessness affords no necessity for abandoning clinging and the other afflictions which take material form (*rūpa* 'the body') as their object. According to the Prāsaṅgika, however, the meditator actually perceives selflessness as the absence of intrinsic being (= dependent origination, and emptiness).

160. Cf. *SN* 22, 85.30; and *MV* 1, 6.38.

161. *MAB,* 255–256: "This sūtra holds that the correct view is expressed in the thought of the self as [dependent] on the five aggregates, and it certainly is intended as a rejection of any 'self' [supposed to be] different from the aggregates. (Cf. *MA* 6.135.) One needs to appreciate how it rejects the [supposition that] form and the other aggregates are themselves the self, and from this, that the dependently designated self—the [actual] object of the philosophical view of a real, substantial self—does not take the aggregates as its appropriated substratum. This is meant to be conducive to awareness of reality [as expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]. If no subject (*upādātṛ* 'appropriator') is apprehended, then its object (*upādāna* 'the appropriated substratum') is also nonexistent, and so there is no clinging to form and the other [aggregates]."

162. *MAB,* 256: "Just as when one says, for example, 'The forest is the trees,' [this implies that] the forest is the composite of trees, and not that it is the nature of [each individual] tree, since this would entail the consequence that every tree is a forest."

163. "The protector," "the one to be subdued," and "the witness" are three expressions traditionally used to characterize the strictly conventional self. Cf., e.g., *DP,* 157, 159–160.

164. CF. *MAB,* 258–259: "[The self] is not the mere composite of parts that are the appropriated substratum of the designation ['self'], that on which the designation is founded, precisely because it is designated in dependence on them, like something fashioned from the material elements. Even though a color like blue and the visual organ of the eye [associated with color perception] are "caused" by the material elements, still neither is simply the composite of these elements. Likewise, even though the self is a designation taking the psychophysical aggregates as its cause, still it would be unreasonable to maintain that it is simply the composite of these aggregates." In the example of the carriage, we can define the Mādhyamika's terms in this way: (1) "Carriage" is the name, or designation *(prajñapti),* which is also referred to as the "appropriator" *(upādātṛ);* (2) the composite parts (axles, wheels, etc.) are that which is designated, or "appropriated," hence the term "appropriated substratum" *(upā-*

dāna). A sort of reciprocity obtains, then, between the appropriator and the appropriated substratum. In the context defined by such a relationship, we must further acknowledge the formal existence of at least two distinct but mutually dependent participants.

165. Karma is both '(volitional) action' and 'the object of action.'

166. *MAB*, 259–260: "Here 'the appropriator' is that which performs the function of appropriating, hence 'the agent'; and 'the appropriating substratum' is that which is taken up, hence 'the object of action.' The appropriator is the self, and the appropriated substratum is any of the five aggregates. In this case, if the composite of form and so on were equivalent to the self, then the agent and the object of action would be identical. This also is undesirable, because it would entail the consequence that the material elements and the forms which take [these elements] as their cause, for example, potter's clay and a jug, would be identical. As it has been said (*MS* 10.1): 'If the fire is the fuel, then the agent and the action are identical.' And further (ibid., 10.15): 'The whole relationship between the self and the appropriated substratum is completely explained through [the analogy of] fire and fuel, as well as [all other relationships like those between] fabric [and its thread], or the jug [and its clay].' "

167. *MAB*, 260–261: "This could not be the case. If one does not assert an agent, then without its cause one also cannot assert an action. . . . Therefore, just as one designates action in dependence on an agent, and the agent in dependence on action, likewise one designates the appropriator in dependence on the appropriated substratum, and the appropriated substratum in dependence on the appropriator. Also (*MS* 27.8): 'The self is not different from the appropriated substratum, nor is it just that same appropriated substratum; it is not [present in] the absence of the appropriated substratum, and it is certainly not the case that it does not exist.' Consequently, it must be understood that in the absence of the agent, action also does not exist. Moreover, those scriptures that teach that although the agent is not apprhended, still the action and the ripening [of that action] does exist, must be understood as [intended to] refute the existence of the agent through any intrinsic being. One must not understand this as a refutation [of the self], which does exist as a conventional part designated in dependence [on other such parts]."

168. That is, because none of these things is actually the self, the concept of an "I" which becomes the object of clinging cannot be based on the aggregates themselves. Cf. *MAB*, 263: "The aggregates are not the 'I' which is the object of [this clinging], nor does this 'I' exist apart from the aggregates. Therefore, because no such 'I' exists to serve as the object, the meditator realizes that the self is unapprehended, and from there [he goes on to realize that] 'mine-ness' also is devoid of substance. Once he has so exposed all composite things as devoid of any appropriated substratum, he attains nirvāṇa. Therefore this analysis is extremely beneficial." ("Mine-ness" refers to all objects of clinging external to the "I.")

169. Cf. *SBS*, fol. 26 (p. 394): *paśyann ahiṁ chidragataṁ svagehe gajo 'tra nāstīti nirastaśaṁkaḥ / jahāti sarpād api nāma bhītim aho hi nāmārjavatā parasya //*

170. Cf. *PSP*, 434: *skandheṣv ātmā vidyate naiva cāmī santi skandhā nātmanītīha yasmāt / saty anyatve syād iyaṁ kalpanā vai tac cānyatvaṁ nāsty ataḥ kalpanaiṣā //*

171. *MAB*, 265: "When there is a difference [between the two], then it is rea-

sonable that there be a container and a contained entity. For example, one can say, 'There is yogurt in the bowl.' The bowl and the yogurt are distinct in the context of everyday experience, and are perceived as container and contained entity. However, the psychophysical aggregates are not different from the self, nor is the self different from them, so there is in this case no [relationship analogous to that which obtains between] 'container' and 'contained entity.' "

172. Cf. *PSP,* 434–435: *iṣṭo nātmā rūpavān nāsti yasmād ātmā mattvārthopayogo hi nātaḥ / bhede gomān rūpavān apy abhede tattvānyatve rūpato nātmanaḥ staḥ //*

173. Cf. *MAB,* 266: "Any identity or difference between the self and the aggregates has already been refuted. The suffix which marks the genitive *(mat-* or *vat-pratyaya)* is applied in the case of 'identity,' for example, 'Devadatta possesses form' *(rūpavān devadattaḥ);* or in the case of 'difference,' for example, '[Devadatta] possesses a cow' *(gomān devadattaḥ).* But there is neither identity nor difference between form and the self, and therefore it is not possible to assert reasonably that the self is in possession of form."

174. Cf. *SBS,* fol. 26 (pp. 394–395): *rūpaṁ nātmā rūpavān naiva cātmā rūpe nātmā rūpam ātmany asac ca / skandhān evaṁ viddhi sarvāṁś caturdhā viṁśatyaṁśā eta iṣṭāḥ svadṛṣṭeḥ //*

175. See stage 4, n. 3.

176. Cf. *SBS,* fols. 26–27 (p. 395): *etāni tāni śikharāṇi samudgatāni satkāyadṛṣṭivipulācalasaṁsthitāni / nairātmyabodhakuliśena vidāritātmā bhedaṁ prayāti sahasaiva tu (saha yair ˘˘) dṛṣṭiśailaḥ //*

177. The argument here is directed against the Saṁmitīyas, or Pudgalavādins, an early Buddhist sect which, according to Candrakīrti, claimed as one of their essential doctrines the view that the self is a "transcendental substance" not susceptible to expression in language or conceptual thought. The same argument could be used against the absolutist interpretation discussed in the first part of §3. For a more sympathetic presentation of this doctrine, see Conze 1962, 122–134.

178. La Vallée Poussin seems to have had some trouble with this stanza. He translated this *pada* as "il soutiennent qu'il est la connaissance des six *vijñānas* (?) (sic.)." He could apparently make no sense of his interpretation.

179. This and the following three stanzas are crucial to the Prāsaṅgika's concept of emptiness. According to the Prāsaṅgika, it makes no sense to speak of a "real entity" that does not exist in a context defined by its identity with its characteristic qualities and its difference from other similarly real entities. This means that all entities are real only insofar as they participate in the relationships that make up everyday experience (the truth of the screen: *saṁvṛtisatya*). From the perspective of the truth of the highest meaning there is only the emptiness of this maze of interpenetrating reflections, and so it must be stressed that the concept of emptiness has nothing to do with an epistemological or ontological monism.

180. *MAB,* 269: "Like the jug, one must also think of the self as existing [merely] as a designation."

181. *MAB,* 271: "In order to clarify both positions, that is, that [the self] as both container *(ādhāra)* and contained *(ādheya),* the compound *skandhādhāra* subsumes the two [meanings]. . . . Therefore, when one properly considers the

self a [mere] designation, unapprehended, then one should not accept the self by means of any of the alternatives which have been discussed."

182. *MAB,* 271: "There is no production without a cause, [nor is there spontaneous production, nor is there production from another, nor from both 'self' and 'other,'] yet we accept the statement 'this originates in dependence on that' so as not to fall into conflict with what is given in the context defined by the truth of the screen. Similarly, in this case as well [the self] is entirely dependent on [another such] dependently designated entity. [All other alternatives for explaining the relationship between the self and the aggregates] must be relinquished, because they are marked by the fallacies that have been described in the preceding stanzas. One must accept the conclusion that the self is simply designated in dependence on the psychophysical aggregates. By doing this, one conforms to convention, for the self is designated as a matter of conventional practice."

183. Candrakīrti has already discussed the first five alternatives listed here, so that only the theses concerning the composite and the shape remain to be dealt with.

184. The carriage cannot be the composite of its parts or the shape divorced from its parts, for if we cease to postulate the existence of the carriage (the possessor of the parts, or the possessor of the shape of the assembled parts), then the "parts" are parts of what? Just as there is no carriage without carriage parts, so there are no carriage parts without a carriage. (For another argument dealing with shape, cf. 6.136.)

185. *MAB,* 273: "If within the carriage the particular shape of the wheel and so on is exactly the same as it was before [assembly of] the carriage, then it is certain that, as it was nonexistent in the midst of the disassembled parts, so the carriage does not exist even when it [is assembled], because the shape of the [individual] parts is no different [from what it was before assembly]."

186. *MAB,* 274: "If within the carriage any difference at all has been produced in the shape of the [parts] as compared with the previous width, length, circularity, and so forth of such things as the wheels, axles, and bolts, then it should be apprehended—but no difference is apprehended. The [individual] wheel possesses a particular shape composed of its spokes, rim, hub, [and the other parts], and when the carriage is [assembled], no difference at all can be perceived. Likewise the width and so on of the axle and [other parts] does not change, and therefore it is unreasonable to say that the carriage is [merely] the shape of its parts."

187. *MAB,* 275: "If any entity whatsoever called 'the composite' did in fact exist, then one might legitimately designate a shape as dependent on it. The so-called composite, however, does not exist in any sense, and how could [the carriage] be designated as a shape dependent on that which does not even exist? According to [our opponent], a designation can be founded only on a real substance." For both the Prāsaṅgika and his opponent, the composite is not real because it is only a composite—an assemblage of real parts. The shape of this "composite" is like "the scent of a flower growing in midair."

188. That is, just as your reasoning leads inevitably to the conclusion that the shape is merely a conventional designation dependent on another designation (the composite) dependent on yet another designation. . . .

189. *MAB,* 275: "Composite things which possess a deceptive intrinsic nature are produced in dependence on falsehood [generated out] of spiritual ignorance. For example, the sprout that possesses a deceptive intrinsic nature is produced in dependence on a seed that itself possesses a deceptive intrinsic nature. One must recognize the nature of all causes and effects without remainder as possessing a deceptive intrinsic nature. What good is this nonsensical clinging to an entity which is like the shadow of a deer, when one is incapable of eating [real] meat even after a hundred thousand attempts?" If one cannot eat real meat (cannot find a real person), then why try to obtain meat from an illusory deer (why try to construct a real person out of illusory "composites")?

190. *MAB,* 276: "It has already been explained how form and so forth are not produced. Therefore, since they are not produced, they do not exist. How is it reasonable that [things] that do not exist should be characterized as the cause of designations like 'jug' and so forth? Consequently, the jug and so on are not in possession of a quality of self characterized by the shape of their form [and their other characteristic qualities]. It is unreasonable that such things as jugs should be considered to have a real substance for an appropriated substratum."

191. *MAB,* 276–277: "*Objection:* If indeed, when searched for according to the seven alternatives in the system just described, the carriage did not exist, then because it did not exist in the world the conventional reality designated "carriage" would be totally destroyed, and one would not encounter such expressions as 'Bring the carriage!' 'Buy a carriage!' and 'Prepare the carriage!' Therefore, because they are taken for granted in the context of everyday experience, carriages and [other such things] do exist. *Response:* This problem is yours alone. The carriage is not discovered when searched for according to the seven alternatives previously discussed, and still you devise methods to establish it through rational analysis as an [objectively real] entity, without accepting any alternative means of proof. Consequently, just how will you establish the everyday, conventional realities represented in expressions like 'Bring the carriage!' and so forth? . . . Although the carriage will not be established through any of the seven alternatives [discussed] in the system above, whether from the perspective of the highest meaning or from that of the screen, still the world abandons rational analysis and designates the carriage in dependence on its parts, the wheel and so on. In the same way [the colors] blue and the like, and [the psychophysical aggregates] feeling and so on [are designated in dependence on their parts]. We, however, accept 'designation in dependence' as the sole condition of origination in dependence, and therefore our position does not lead to the consequence of destroying everyday convention. It would behoove our opponent as well to accept this [concept]."

192. *MAB,* 278: "With reference to its appropriation of the substratum [composed of] wheels and so on, it is an 'agent'; and with reference to its own appropriated substratum it is an 'appropriator.' "

193. *MAB,* 279: "[Everyday experience] must be completely turned around. The everyday experience of the screen does not exist when subjected to analysis, but it does exist when it is unexamined and taken for granted. For just this reason, when the meditator systematically analyzes it in this way he quickly

plumbs the depths of the reality [expressed in the truth of the highest meaning]."

194. *MAB,* 280: "Although one who conceptualizes does indeed conceive of the wheel and so forth as a carriage simply through knowing them in conjunction with each other, another person [who is not entirely dependent on conceptualization] does not do this. The [first person] conceives of a 'possessor' of parts like the wheel, which is dependent on it own parts. But if the wheel and the other parts are completely disassembled and scattered about, then they will not be thought of as parts of a carriage."

195. *MAB,* 281: "For example, when a carriage—the possessor of parts—is burned, its parts as well will certainly be burned. Similarly, when the fire of discrimination springs from the friction caused by rubbing together the wood of analysis, and the carriage is completely burned by this fire, which has nonapprehension as its flame, then the parts also become fuel for wisdom, and they inflict no harm [through being conceptualized as possessing some] quality of self, because they too are incinerated."

196. *MAB,* 281–282: "Just as the carriage is designated in dependence on the wheels and so forth—the wheels and other parts serving as the appropriated substratum *(upādāna)* and the carriage as the appropriator *(upādātṛ),* likewise, in accord with the truth of the screen, so as not to destroy everyday convention completely, the self is considered an appropriator. The five psychophysical aggregates, the six elements, and the six sense organs with their particular objective referents constitute the appropriated substratum of the self, and the self is conceptualized in dependence on these aggregates, and so on. As the wheels and other parts make up the appropriated substratum of the carriage, so the psychophysical aggregates make up the appropriated substratum of the self."

197. *Upādāna* 'appropriation' = 'the appropriated substratum,' just as *karma* 'action' = 'the object of the action.'

198. *MAB,* 282: "In the same way that this relationship between 'appropriated substratum' and 'appropriator' is ordered according to convention, [in the case of the self] the relationship between 'object of the action' and 'agent' is to be accepted as, for example, with the carriage. . . . The so-called appropriated substratum of the psychophysical aggregates is the object of the action, while the self is the agent. This is the [conventional] relationship. The self, which is entirely dependent on [other] dependent designations *(upādāyaprajñapti-samāśrita),* provides no basis for concepts of absolutism or nihilism, or any other [such extreme views]. Consequently, concepts like permanence and impermanence are easily refuted."

199. *MAB,* 285–286: "*Objection:* But why is it that concepts like impermanence and so on do not properly apply to the self? *Response:* Because [in terms of the truth of the highest meaning] there is no such entity. If there were any self whatsoever with the intrinsic nature of an entity, then concepts of impermanence would be applicable, but no such self exists, and because it does not exist [these concepts and any others do not apply to it]. . . . When searched for through the seven alternatives, a permanent or impermanent ['I'] is impossible. He who does not perceive [its] unreality, who is attached to [its] existence

through the force of spiritual ignorance and clings to the notion 'This is the self' because of his philosophical view of a real, substantial 'I'—he transmigrates from one life to the next."

200. *MAB,* 286–287: "One should know the 'self' as that with reference to which the idea of an 'I' becomes manifest to numberless creatures wrapped in spiritual ignorance and dwelling in various migrations: humans, hungry ghosts, animals, [gods, demons, and those tormented in the hell regions]. The cognition of 'mine' appears with reference to the internal [things] sharing in the quality of self, like the eye and so forth, which are the foundation of the designation [of a self], as well as the external [possessions of the self]. That is, anything there may be with reference to which [the self] becomes a 'possessor.' This self is established through spiritual ignorance, and not through any intrinsic essence. Although it does not exist, it is conventionally so designated through spiritual ignorance. The meditators, however, do not apprehend it in any way; and when it is not apprehended, the eye and so forth which constitute its appropriated substratum also do not appear. The meditator apprehends no essence in any entity, and he is liberated from the round of transmigration."

201. *MAB,* 287–288: "Just as a jug is impossible without potter's clay, so in the absence of the self there is also nothing to be called 'mine.' Consequently the meditator apprehends neither 'I' nor 'mine.' He perceives no round of transmigration and is liberated. When form and the [psychophysical aggregates] are not apprehended, then [afflictions] like clinging and the rest which depend on them also do not arise. [Having perceived] no appropriated substratum, the pratyekabuddhas and śrāvakas abide in nirvāṇa. But the bodhisattvas are dominated by compassion, and even though they have already perceived selflessness they remain in the current of existence until [all beings have attained] awakening. On this account, those who are skillful should strive toward [perception of] selflessness as it has been explained here." La Vallée Poussin's *sred pa'i* (1907–1912, 288.7) is erroneous, as he surmises. Cf. *TKP,* 406.13, for *srid pa'i* 'current of existence' on which we have based our translation.

202. *TKP,* 408: "Not only are parts and so forth interdependently established, but cause and effect as well are interdependent. . . . Accordingly, in the event that they are established through an intrinsic being, then: (1) It would be unreasonable [to suppose that] the cause is primary, since when the cause exists the effect is established in dependence on it; and (2) it would be unreasonable to suppose that the effect is primary, since it would [in that case] emerge without any cause. Therefore, it must be understood that, like the carriage, cause and effect are designations dependent on each other, and not intrinsically existing."

203. *MAB,* 291: "In this case, if the cause produces the effect through connection with it, then as there is no difference between a river and the water of the ocean with which it merges, the merged [cause and effect] would be identical. Consequently there would be no difference between saying 'This is the cause' and 'This is the effect.' . . . If there is production without connection, then just as something else which is not the effect does not connect [with the cause, the effect would not connect with it cause] and would not be produced.

Or else, if there is production without connection, then everything might as well be produced [from a single, identical cause]. For one who advocates a cause and effect with intrinsic being, no third concept [of the causal relationship] is possible aside from [the two alternatives of] connection or nonconnection, so an effect is not produced from a cause with intrinsic being."

204. *MAB,* 291–292: "A cause that has the quality of being a cause *(hetutva)* is a cause from which an effect follows. If, even in the absence of any effect, a cause could have the quality of being a cause, then the 'quality of being a cause' possessed by this cause would be characterized by the nonexistence of any cause; this is unacceptable."

205. *MAB,* 292: "We have conducted [the preceding] analysis of the intrinsic distinguishing characteristics of the produced and the producer, [demonstrating that] production depends on erroneous conceptualization. Entities are like magical apparitions, for their intrinsic nature is unproduced. Nevertheless, like the hair and other things apprehended by someone afflicted with ophthalmia, even without any intrinsic being [these entities] are taken as the objects of reified concepts, without [further] reflection. [Given this understanding,] the previously discussed fallacies do not apply to us. Also, insofar as the things of everyday experience are established without analysis, they are established."

206. *MAB,* 293–294: "Here is why we say that you negate all things without any reason. Indeed, what is reasonable about [your claim] that a cause unconnected with its effect does not produce [that effect]? Without connection a magnet attracts the iron which is its proper object, while it does not attract everything. Similarly, without connection the eye perceives form, which is its proper object, while it does not [perceive] anything (i.e., it does not perceive sounds or other nonmaterial things). In this same way, (1) a cause lacks any connection [with the effect] it produces; but (2) a cause does not produce just anything that is not connected [with it]—it produces only its proper effect. Therefore noble men would never agree with you, because you unreasonably negate all things. Moreover, in arguing you resort to any refutation at all. Without any cogent position of your own, you argue just to destroy your opponent's position."

207. *TKP,* 412 (cf. *MAB,* 294–295): "The opponent's thesis presupposes 'existence'; that is, it presupposes the assertion of an ultimate meaning established through reference to [a concept of] intrinsic being. But we hold no such thesis, and therefore the fallacy implicit in both 'connection' and 'nonconnection,' and the consequences thereof, do not apply to us. . . . As it has been said (*PV,* 260–261): ' "Subhūti, does something *(dharma)* unproduced attain an unproduced goal?" Subhūti responds: "Honorable Śāriputra, I would not consider an unproduced attainment to be attained by something produced, nor would I consider it to be attained by something unproduced." Śāriputra continues: "Honorable Subhūti, is there no goal and no full realization *(abhisamaya)* [of that goal]?" Subhūti responds: "Honorable Śāriputra, the goal and full realization [of that goal] certainly do exist, but not in the form of both [soteriological and conventional truths]. Śāriputra, both the goal and full realization are simply everyday realities. [All of the various levels of spiritual attainment including] the bodhisattva are mere conventional realities. From the perspec-

tive of the highest meaning, however, there is no goal and no full realization." ' "

208. "Objective fact" (Tib. *dngos grub*) is an atemporal, noncontextualized truth, as opposed to a statement designed to suit the needs of a particular time and place.

209. See the discussion of these stanzas in §3.4.2, "Dependent designation," and at the close of "The perfection of wisdom," in §4.6.3.

210. The same list of sixteen examples is given in *MVP* §933–957.

211. "Being" *(bhāva)* is the object of reified concepts of intrinsic existence. Cf. *MS* 22.11: translated and discussed in §3, n. 69.

212. *MAB*, 313: " 'Extreme' refers to the extremes of absolutism and nihilism."

213. The eighteen elements are the six senses, with their respective objects and the cognitions associated with them.

214. The various types of meditation are discussed in the context of the relevant classical sources in Dayal 1932, 229ff; see also Lamotte 1944–1980 for extended discussion of the *dhyānas* and other special powers referred to in these closing stanzas of stage 6.

215. The "gateways to deliverance" *(vimokṣamūkhas)* are a series of meditations on three aspects of emptiness. They lead to the recognition that everyday experience *(saṁsāra)* is the freedom of nirvāṇa. The first of these, "deliverance through emptiness" *(śūnyatāvimokṣa)*, is associated with composite things and their absence of a self *(anātman)*. The second, "deliverance through signlessness" *(animittavimokṣa)*, relates to the absence in conventional things of any "sign" or logical mark which could be seized upon and held by the mind. This is the recognition of any discrete thing's inability to provide lasting satisfaction to the craving that comes from ignorance of their deeper nature. The third, "deliverance through wishlessness" *(apraṇihitavimokṣa)*, is the cessation of all hope and fear previously connected with the idea that enduring security could be found in any composite thing. This is the renunciation of desire for nirvāṇa, because the possibility of nirvāṇa is seen to be present not in some form of security that can be desired, but here and now in the world as it is. For a more detailed discussion of these three, see Conze 1962, 59–64.

216. La Vallée Poussin 1907–1912 numbers 6.209 as 6.210.

217. La Vallée Poussin 1907–1912 numbers both this stanza and the next 6.211.

218. These four types are: (1) knowledge of the teachings arrived at through analysis and logic; (2) knowledge of their meaning; (3) knowledge of the etymology of the words used in the texts; and (4) confidence in one's grasp of the first three types. See Dayal 1932, 259ff., for a brief discussion of the *pratisaṁvids* with references to classical sources.

219. Or "the emptiness of nonbeing."

220. Or "the emptiness of being."

221. See stage 6, n. 3 above, for "cessation."

222. The "common flock" is a reference to the śrāvakas. The two wings are skillful means, which has to do with conventional truth, and wisdom, which has to do with the truth of the highest meaning.

STAGE SEVEN

1. La Vallée Poussin numbers the five stanzas which describe stages 7–10 across chapter boundaries. His decision to group these last four stages together probably reflects their common concern with the development of skillful means.

2. Cf. *TKP,* 442: "It is called 'cessation in suchness' because at the time of [his] noble balanced concentration *(āryasamādhi)* all conceptual diffusion associated with the appearance of dualism ceases in 'suchness.' "

STAGE EIGHT

1. That is, the buddhas turn the bodhisattva away from reified concepts of isolated, individual liberation and direct him back into the stream of everyday life, where his resolution to act for the benefit of all living beings is reaffirmed and brought to perfection. The event is discussed in *DB,* 43.

STAGE NINE

1. Meaning unclear.

QUALITIES AND FRUITS OF THE TEN STAGES

1. We have used La Vallée Poussin's numbering.

2. Cf. *MAB,* 355: "Only in a stainless sky can the moon illuminate all living beings, and similarly . . . the powers [of a buddha] are produced [in order to contribute indirectly] to the eradication of any delusion that obstructs attainment of the [totality of] the blessed buddha's qualities." The powers of a buddha remove the stain of delusion from the bodhisattva (the sky) so that the light of the buddha's qualities (the moon) can illuminate all beings.

3. Cf. ibid., 356: "For example, even though jugs, bowls, and other such vessels are different, still they are equivalent insofar as they are [all] hollow, and the space inside them is not different. Similarly, even though form, feeling, and the other psychophysical aggregates are different [from each other], they are real in that each possesses the distinguishing characteristic of nonproduction. In this way they are without difference and should be understood as identical." This is the "sameness" *(samatā)* of all things, their emptiness of any intrinsically valid existence.

4. *TKP,* 456: "If there is no arising, that is, no production of a concept which penetrates reality, then in the absence of a knower of reality, who is it that can reasonably be credited by you with having taught to other disciples: 'I have completely penetrated reality, which possesses the distinguishing characteristic [of nonproduction]'? [Such a claim] would be unreasonable."

5. Cf. ibid.: "If one asserts that although the reality of form and so forth is intrinsically unproduced, [this reality] is known by the intellect, [then we raise

the following objection]. When one asserts that reality is intrinsically the peace of nonproduction, then it must also be accepted [as a consequence] that the intellect—that is, wisdom *(prajñā)*—would in no way penetrate to such an object. And on this account, if one goes on to maintain that the intellect does indeed penetrate to a reality intrinsically devoid of production, then what image of an object will that intellect (cognition) possess? No image at all, it would seem. Therefore, in the absence of any object whatsoever, the intellect cannot penetrate to reality." The Prāsaṅgika offers the following cryptic response to this objection (cf. *MAB,* 358): "It is not that there is some knowledge or another of a given object such that reality is understood through the medium of a reified concept. This is the case simply because both knowledge and the object of knowledge are unproduced." Perhaps the argument here is that the intellect can conceive of reality only indirectly, through the concepts and sensory impressions which act as its objects. It must always function in the context of conventional truth, recognizing distinctions between things in time and space and defining their relationships to one another. The nondualistic knowledge of a buddha, however, is immersed both in conventional truth and in the truth of the highest meaning, where all such distinctions are perceived as interdependent features of everyday experience. See the remarks on nondualistic knowledge in §4.10 and in §5.4: "Nondualistic knowledge." Dualistic knowledge divides; nondualistic knowledge contextualizes. *TKP,* 459: "Like water mixed with water, this [nondualistic] knowledge is fixed in sameness."

6. The most obvious "sound" is the voice of a buddha.

7. The deeds of a buddha are accomplished without any effort, since the body of a buddha, as well as any acts that he may perform, are all produced through the merit gained during his time as a bodhisattva.

8. This last line is not entirely clear. An alternative translation is "this [peace] is directly experienced as the body [of the buddha]."

9. A wish-fulfilling crystal *(cintāmaṇi)* is able to grant any wish to the person who possesses it. Even though the gem is responsive to the thoughts and feelings of its owner, it is devoid of any conceptual mechanism.

10. That is, it is realized through the body of bliss (cf. *TKP,* 466).

11. Jambudvīpa is the southernmost continent of the four which surround the mythological mount Meru. It includes (or is equivalent to) India.

12. It is unclear here whether *khams* (Skt. *dhātu*) refers to material elements or to the realms governed by the buddhas.

13. "Intentions" or "motivations" are of two broad types. *MAB,* 378: " 'Intentions' are misleading doubts that remain, and these intentions are 'faculties' in the sense that they facilitate production of clinging and so on. The word 'various' alludes to intentions [of a second type] which are the causes of virtues like conviction, and so forth."

14. This refers to the twenty-two faculties enumerated in *MVP,* §108.

15. See note to 6.207.

16. Cf. *RV* 5.61–64; also *CS.*

17. The Inferior Vehicle (Hīnayāna) and the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna).

18. There are five "impurities" *(pañcakaṣāyas)* enumerated in *MVP,* §124. First is *ayuḥkaṣāya,* the decrease in lifespan in this epoch, then *dṛṣṭikaṣāya,* dog-

matic philosophical or religious beliefs grounded in reified thought, *kleśakaṣāya*, the afflictions, primarily the affliction of clinging, *sattvakaṣāya*, the impurity of existence as an ignorant living being, and *kalpakaṣāya*, the problem of living in a degenerate time.

19. See *MAB*, 403, for the information in these brackets.

EPILOGUE

1. Cf. *MAB*, 77, translated and discussed in stage 6, n. 5.

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This is a select bibliography; the works included here are only those cited within the text and notes of this book. For more information on particular topics, the reader should consult the bibliographies mentioned in §3, n. 1.

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A Aṅguttara Nikāya
U Udāna
CV Cullavagga
D Dīgha Nikāya
DP Dhammapada
Pāli ed., Eng. trans., Radhakrishnan 1950.
MV Mahāvagga
V Vinaya
VM Buddhaghosa. *Visuddhimagga*
Eng. trans., Ñanamoli 1976.
S Saṁyutta Nikāya

SANSKRIT

AK Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu
Skt. ed., Pradhan 1975 (with Vasubandhu's *bhāṣya*).
Fr. trans., La Vallée Poussin 1971.

AS Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
Skt. ed., Vaidya 1960a.
Eng. trans., Conze 1975.
CS Catuḥśataka of Āryadeva
Tib. ed. with Skt. fragments, Lang 1986.
CSt Catuḥstava of Nāgārjuna
Skt./Tib. ed., Eng. trans., Lindtner 1982.
TSN Trisvabhāvanirdeśa of Vasubandhu
Skt./Tib. ed., Fr. trans., La Vallée Poussin 1932–1933.
Eng. trans., Kochumuttom 1982, 90–126; Anacker 1984, 287–298.
DB Daśabhūmika
Skt. ed., Vaidya 1967.
PV Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
Skt. ed., Dutt 1934.
PSP Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti
Skt. ed., see under *MS*.
Eng. trans., Sprung 1979 (chaps. 1–10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22–25); Stcherbatsky 1927, 79–212 (chaps. 1 and 25).
(Fr. trans.,) Jong 1949, 1–86 (chaps. 18–22); May 1959, 51–298 (chaps. 2–4, 6–9, 11, 23–24, 26–27).
Ger. trans., Schayer 1931a (chaps. 5 and 12–16) and 1931b (chap. 10).
BCA Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva, with the *pañjikā* of Prajñākaramati
Skt. ed., Vaidya 1960b.
Eng. trans., Matics 1970; Batchelor 1979.
Fr. trans., La Vallée Poussin 1907.
BB Bodhisattvabhūmi
Skt. ed., Wogihara 1971.
Eng. trans. (of part 1:4 *Tattvārthapaṭalam*), Willis 1979.
MA Madhyamakāvatārakārikā of Candrakīrti
Tib. ed., La Vallée Poussin 1907–1912 (with Candrakīrti's *bhāṣya*).
Eng. trans. of 1–5, Hopkins 1980; and of 6, Rabten & Batchelor 1983.
Fr. trans. of 1–5, 6.1–165, La Vallée Poussin 1907–1911.
Ger. trans. of 6.166–226, Tauscher 1981.
MAB Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya of Candrakīrti
Tib. ed. and trans., see *MA*.
Chin. trans., Fa zun 法尊 1975.
Jap. trans. of 6, Ogawa 1976.
MPPS Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra (also *-upadeśa*), attributed to Nāgārjuna
Chin. trans., T.1509, vol. 25, pp. 57A–756B.
Eng. trans. of extracts, Ramanan 1966.
Fr. trans. of 1 and 2.20, Lamotte 1944–1980.
MVA Mahāvastu avadāna
Skt. ed., Senart 1882–1897.
MVK Madhyāntavibhāgakārikā of Maitreyanātha
Skt. ed., Nagao 1964 (with Vasubandhu's *bhāṣya*).
Eng. trans., Anacker 1984, 191–286 (with Vasubandhu's *bhāṣya*); Kochumuttom 1982, 27–89 (with extracts from Vasubandhu's *bhāṣya*).
MVKB Madhyāntavibhāgakārikābhāṣya of Vasubandhu

Skt. ed., see *MVK*.
Eng. trans., see *MVK*.
MS Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna
Skt. ed., La Vallée Poussin 1903–1916 (with Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*); Jong 1977.
Eng. trans., Inada 1970.
MSA Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra of Asaṅga
Skt. ed., Lévi 1907–1911.
MVP Mahāvyutpatti
Tib. ed., Sakaki 1916–1925.
MMV Mūlamadhyamakavṛttibuddhapālita of Buddhapālita
Tib. ed., Eng. trans. of 1–21, Saito 1984.
RV Ratnāvalī of Nāgārjuna
Skt./Tib./Chin. ed., Hahn 1982.
Eng. trans., Hopkins 1975.
LA Laṅkāvatārasūtra
Skt. ed., Vaidya 1963.
Eng. trans., Suzuki 1932.
VP Vajracchedikā prajñāpāramitā
Skt. ed., Conze 1974.
Eng. trans., Conze 1958.
VV Vigrahavyāvartanī
Skt. ed., Eng. trans., Bhattacharya, Johnston, and Kunst 1978.
VN Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra
Tib. ed., Ōshika 1970.
Eng. trans., Thurman 1976.
Fr. trans., Lamotte 1962.
ŚS Śikṣāsamuccaya of Śāntideva
Skt. ed., Vaidya 1961.
Eng. trans., Bendall and Rouse 1922.
SP Saddharmapuṇḍarīka
Skt. ed., Dutt 1953.
Eng. trans., Kern 1884.
SN Saṁdhinirmocanasūtra
Tib. ed., Fr. trans., Lamotte 1935.
SBS Subhāṣitasaṁgraha
Skt. ed., Bendall 1903–1904.

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TKP Tsong kha pa. *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rgya cher bshad pa dgongs pa rab gsal*
Tib. ed., *P* 6143, vol. 154.
Tib. ed., Sarnath 1971.
Eng. trans. of 1–5, Hopkins 1980.
C Co ne bsTan 'gyur
Microfiche ed. of the Tibetan canon. New York: Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions.
D sDe dge bsTan 'gyur

Xylograph of the Tibetan canon. Sarnath, India: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.

N sNar thang bsTan 'gyur

Xylograph of the Tibetan canon. Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

P Peking bsTan 'gyur

Edition of the Tibetan canon. Suzuki 1958.

CHINESE

T Taishō-shinshū-daizōkyō

Edition of the Chinese canon. Takakusu and Watanabe 1922–1933. Tokyo.

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